

# Sight & Sound

*The Film Monthly*

February

1/6



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# Sight & Sound

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## CONTENTS

|                                           |     |                              |                      |
|-------------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|----------------------|
| LONDON - PARIS - ROME - HOLLYWOOD         | 386 | <i>Films of the Month—</i>   |                      |
| FILM GUIDE                                | 388 | THE BREAKING POINT           | Penelope Houston 413 |
|                                           |     | LA VIE COMMENCE DEMAIN       |                      |
| <i>The Front Page—</i>                    | 389 | HA'PENNY BREEZE              | Gavin Lambert 414    |
|                                           |     | EDITING                      | Karel Reisz 415      |
| THE PROTECTED INDUSTRY (3) Duncan Crow    | 391 | MUSIC                        | Antony Hopkins 416   |
| INTERVIEW WITH ROSSELLINI Francis Koval   | 393 | TELEVISION                   | Ernest Lindgren 417  |
| TOBY JUG AND BOTTLE Ken Tynan             | 395 | THE SOUND TRACK              | John Huntley 417     |
| THE SEVENTH ART                           | 398 | U.S.A. v. HOLLYWOOD          | Ernest Borneman 418  |
| NOTES ON A RENAISSANCE Gavin Lambert      | 399 | REVALUATIONS (9)             |                      |
|                                           |     | L'ATALANTE                   | Roger Manvell 421    |
| THE SIEGFRIED OF SEX Simon Harcourt-Smith | 410 | CORRESPONDENCE & COMPETITION | 423                  |

ON THE COVER: Esther Williams (see "The Front Page") in a forthcoming musical, *Pagan Love Song*, with Hawaiian locations

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Scriptwriter Henri Jeanson directs his first film, "Lady in the Evening", about Parisian music-hall life in the 'twenties, with Suzy Delair and Louis Jouvet

## LONDON

CURRENT AND FORTHCOMING productions mark the return of two or three directors too long absent from the studios, and although it is a long way from the plan to the finished picture, it is pleasant to report that the planners seem more busy than for some months past.

The most consistently busy studio this year will be Ealing. Shooting there at the moment is *The Man in the White Suit*, the comedy of a back room boy who invents a fabric that neither gets dirty nor wears out, and of reactions in the textile industry. The director is Alexander Mackendrick, the star, Alec Guinness.

*Secret People*, Thorold Dickinson's first film since *Queen of Spades*, follows. The story of underground revolutionaries, it is a study of the effect of political violence on character. The script is by Thorold Dickinson and Wolfgang Wilhelm.

Later in the year, Robert Hamer will film a play still running in the West End, *His Excellency*.

Location from the smuggling comedy, "Green Grow the Rushes", with Richard Burton (left), the A.C.T. co-operative venture directed by Derek Twist



# LONDON - PARIS -

Carol Reed is now shooting his Conrad story, *An Outcast of the Islands*, with Ralph Richardson, Trevor Howard, and an Egyptian discovery, Kerima. David Lean, having left the Rank Organisation (to which he was never tied by contract), now joins the Korda group to make *The Sound Barrier*, the idea of which came from a newspaper report of the crash of a plane that broke up in mid-air while attempting supersonic speed.

Launder-Gilliat plans for the year are, for Frank Launder, a film called *Beauty Queen*, the story of an ordinary girl who suddenly attains fame by winning a national beauty contest: and, for Sidney Gilliat, a life of Gilbert and Sullivan.

Anthony Asquith has completed his version of Terence Rattigan's *The Browning Version*, with Michael Redgrave as the schoolmaster on the verge of retirement and Jean Kent as his embittered wife. The film will be seen next month.

A life of Lilian Baylis is one of Herbert Wilcox's plans for the year. Edith Evans plays the lead in a screen biography written by Miles Malleon.

A version of H. E. Bates' *The Poacher* is announced by Bernard Miles.

With the directorial assistance of Robert Helpmann and Michael Benthall, Sir Alexander Korda will produce and direct a film of Margot Fonteyn in *The Sleeping Beauty*.

## PARIS

French production is less lively than a few months ago. Autant-Lara is planning a new film from a Balzac story, *L'Auberge Rouge*: Jean Gremillon is shooting *L'Etrange Madame X*, with Michèle Morgan and Henri Vidal: from Clair and Cocteau there is no news.

Marcel Carné has finished *Juliette ou la Clef des Songes*, adapted from a play by Georges Neveux, about a young man who visits in a dream a village in which everyone has lost his memory. The leading players are Gérard Philipe and Suzanne Cloutier.

The new film of Julien Duvivier has been shot mainly on location, and is concerned with a cross-section of life in Paris. The title is *Sous le Ciel de Paris Coule la Seine*.

*Edouard et Caroline*, a comedy about a pianist of neglected talent, is Jacques Becker's new film, with Daniel Gelin and Anne Vernon.

## ROME

The advent of winter finds de Sica's *Miracolo a Milano* completed, and most other noteworthy directors (with the exception of Luciano Emmer, currently finishing up his second feature-length picture, *Paris Est Toujours Paris*, with Aldo Fabrizi) in between films.

Alberto Lattuada, whose recently completed *Luci del Varieta* (*Music Hall Lights*)—a backstage vaudeville story starring his wife, Carla del Poggio—has just been released, is preparing *Servizio Sensazionale*, a film on the newspaper game dedicated to Mark Hellinger, whose productions are said to have inspired the story.



# ROME - HOLLYWOOD

While recovering from critical blasts aimed at his latest *Non C'e Pace tra gli Ulivi* (*No Peace under the Olive Trees*), **Giuseppe de Santis** is looking for a "lightweight" script to film before he tackles his long-planned *Nostro Pane Quotidiano* (*Our Daily Bread*), a peasant story with a social theme, set in Calabria.

Having abandoned a project to film *Cronache di Poveri Amanti* (*Chronicle of Poor Lovers*), a best-selling novel by Vasco Pratolini on which he had been working for over a year, **Luchino Visconti** is considering offers to direct a Technicolor *Magnani* in a Merimee story and a historical piece with Fabrizi.

**Renato Castellani**, whose fine talent for bringing new faces to the screen is evident in his last two *Sotto il Sole di Roma* and *E' Primavera*, will continue the policy in his next film, to be made with a non-professional cast, called *Due Soldi di Speranza* (*Two Pennies of Hope*).

The first feature film of **Michelangelo Antonioni**, former critic, writer, outstanding documentarist, *Cronaca di un Amore*, has received a favourable press, and he is currently considering several offers, the most interesting of which is for a picture based on the early days of Fascism in Italy and its effect on the youth of that period.

In addition to **Mervyn Le Roy**, whose *Quo Vadis* is now being processed in Hollywood, three other foreign directors have recently completed films in Italy. Director of *Berliner Ballade*, **R. A. Stemmle**, has finished editing *Abbiamo Vinto* (*We've Won*), a comedy on the last days of the war in Italy: **Léonide Moguy** has finished *Tomorrow is Another Day*, with his discovery, **Anna Maria Pierangeli**; and **Gian-Carlo Menotti** has filmed his own musical drama, *The Medium*.

## HOLLYWOOD

**John Huston** is filming **Stephen Crane's** novel about the Civil War, *The Red Badge of Courage*, with **Audie Murphy**.

**Robert Rossen's** new film, with **Mel Ferrer**, is *The Brave Bulls*, from **Tom Lea's** novel. Most of it was shot in Mexico.

*Decision before Dawn*, **Anatole Litvak's** new film, partly made in Germany, is the story of underground resistance to the Nazis during the war. Players include **Gary Merrill** and **Richard Basehart**.

A newspaper story, *Ace in the Hole*, with **Kirk Douglas**, is the latest film of **Billy Wilder**.

**Vincente Minnelli** resumes his partnership with **Gene Kelly**, star and choreographer of *An American in Paris*, a new Technicolor musical with **Gershwin** tunes.

Having finished *Carrie*, from **Theodore Dreiser's** novel, with **Laurence Olivier** and **Jennifer Jones**, **William Wyler** is now preparing an adaptation of **Sidney Kingsley's** play, *Detective Story* (seen in London last year), with **Kirk Douglas**.

A new **Louis de Rochemont** production, shot on location in New Hampshire, *The Whistle at Eaton Falls*, is being directed by **Robert Siodmak**. It is the story of the regeneration of a small-town community. The leading player is **Dorothy Gish**.

**Raymond Chandler** has scripted the latest **Hitchcock**, *Strangers on a Train*, with **Ruth Roman** and **Robert Walker**.



Music-hall life is also the subject of **Alberto Lattuada's** new "Luc del Varieta"

*Cyrano de Bergerac*, with **Jose Ferrer**, is the latest **Stanley Kramer** production, directed by **Michael Gordon**.

Last summer's agreement between **Jerry Wald** and **Norman Krasna** and **Howard Hughes** of R.K.O. was hailed as the biggest independent production deal ever made. The Wald-Krasna team arranged to produce 60 pictures for R.K.O. in the next five years, the total investment involved being \$50,000,000. Their new company, Wald-Krasna productions, secured from the deal considerable autonomy, having complete control over all pictures budgeted at less than \$900,000. One of their most interesting projects is a screen version of **Budd Schulberg's** novel *The Harder They Fall*, about a South American boxer brought to the U.S.A., exploited and cheated: another is **Clifford Odets's** play, *Clash by Night*.

Wald and Krasna were both once on the *New York Graphic* (respectively radio and dramatic editors). Mr. Wald began his screen career as a writer with Warners, and has produced for them films including *Task Force*, *Johnny Belinda* and *Key Largo*. Mr. Krasna, writer, director and producer, scripted *Fury*, *Bachelor Mother*, *The Devil and Miss Jones*, and won an Academy Award for the script of *Princess O'Rourke*, which he also directed.

"The Brave Bulls", **Robert Rossen's** latest film, was shot largely in Mexico. The leading player is **Mel Ferrer**



# SIGHT AND SOUND'S GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

*Brief Pointers to the principal films showing in British cinemas during February. Last-minute changes of programme after our press-date may cause one or two inaccuracies (chiefly in the London area) but we hope this list may serve as a useful general guide. Films with an asterisk are particularly recommended.*

\***ALL ABOUT EVE** (Fox). Too long but often witty and shrewd account of a young actress's quietly unscrupulous climb to fame. Good theatre-land atmosphere and splendid performance by Bette Davis. (Anne Baxter, George Sanders, Gary Merrill: director, Joseph L. Mankiewicz.)

\***ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT** (Eros). Milestone's 1930 study of a group of young German volunteers in the 1914-1918 war stands the test of time pretty well, and emerges for the most part as an honest and arresting film. (Lew Ayres, Louis Wolheim, Slim Summerville.)

**BLACKMAILED** (G.F.D.). Various people involved in a blackmailer's activities, and their efforts to escape. Undistinguished. (Mai Zetterling, Dirk Bogarde: director, Marc Allegret.)

**BORN TO BE BAD** (R.K.O.). Joan Fontaine as a refined adventuress: routine triangle, deceits and come-uppance. (Robert Ryan, Zachary Scott: director, Nicholas Ray.)

**BORN YESTERDAY** (Columbia). Judy Holliday brilliant in quite entertaining transcription of Garson Kanin's comedy. (William Holden, Broderick Crawford: director, George Cukor.)

**BRANDED** (Paramount). Alan Ladd in vigorous Technicolor western about a gunman who masquerades as a rich rancher's son, but makes good. (Mona Freeman, Charles Bickford: director, Rudolph Mate.)

**BREAKING POINT, The** (Warners). New version of Hemingway's "To Have and Have Not", about a Florida boat-owner's struggle to earn an honest living and maintain his self respect. Too slick and artificial in style, but redeemed in part by John Garfield's fine performance. (Phyllis Thaxter, Patricia Neal: director, Michael Curtiz.)

\***CINDERELLA** (R.K.O.). The first full-length Disney fairy tale for some time: charming animal characters, a teen-age heroine and prince, and on the whole very enjoyable.

\***CITY LIGHTS** (United Artists). Reissue of one of Chaplin's greatest films (1931): the story of a tramp, an eccentric millionaire, and a blind flowergirl, told with humour and intense pathos. (Chaplin, Virginia Cherrill, Harry Myers: written and directed by Chaplin.)

**DARK MAN** (G.F.D.). A Sussex manhunt, good locations but very poor story. (Maxwell Reed, Natasha Parry: director, Jeffery Dell.)

\***DOMENICA D'AGOSTO** (Film Traders). The lives of rich and poor contrasted and entwined one afternoon on a Roman pleasure beach: a little diffuse, a little too slight, but fresh, gay and lively. (Anna Baldini, Franco Interlenghi: director, Luciano Emmer.)

**FLAME AND THE ARROW, The** (Warners). High-spirited cloak and sword adventures set in medieval Lombardy: many acrobatic stunts, no pretence of period accuracy, and quite good fun. (Burt Lancaster, Virginia Mayo: director, Jacques Tourneur.)

**GLASS MENAGERIE, The** (Warners). Screen version of the Tennessee Williams play about a mother's efforts to provide a gentleman caller for her crippled, shy daughter. Fails to convey the poetic qualities of the original. (Gertrude Lawrence, Jane Wyman, Kirk Douglas, Arthur Kennedy: director, Irving Rapper.)

**HARVEY** (G.F.D.). Adaptation of the play about a man who imagines himself to be accompanied everywhere by a white rabbit six feet tall: whimsy retained, but charm lost in transit. (James Stewart, Josephine Hull: director, Henry Koster.)

**INTO THE BLUE** (British Lion). Very mild romantic comedy, set mainly on a yacht. (Michael Wilding, Odile Versois: director, Herbert Wilcox.)

**I SHALL RETURN** (Fox). Guerilla warfare in the Philippines; sadly mishandled in all departments. (Tyrone Power, Micheline Puelle: director, Fritz Lang.)

**JOFROI** (G.C.T.). Marcel Pagnol adapted, brother René directed, this 1933 version of a Jean Giono story about an old peasant prepared to die for his useless fruit trees. The slender material requires more style than it gets here. (Vincent Scotto, Henri Poupon.)

**KIM** (M.G.M.). Deviationist version of Kipling, with lavishly authentic backgrounds and too little adventure. (Dean Stockwell, Errol Flynn: director, Victor Saville.)

**KING SOLOMON'S MINES** (M.G.M.). Large-scale, well photographed account of safari in Africa: Rider Haggard story, wild animals, local Technicolor. (Stewart Granger, Deborah Kerr: directors, Compton Bennett, Andrew Marton.)

**MAN IN WHITE, The** (A.B. Pathé). Dubbed and shortened version of *D'Homme a Hommes*, biography of Henri Dunant, Red Cross founder: well staged disasters, but little else. (Jean-Louis Barrault, Bernard Blier: director, Christian Jacque.)

**MANON** (Grand National). Clouzot's modern, very freely adapted version of *Manon Lescaut*: occasionally brilliant, generally flashy, intermittently censored. (Michel Auclair, Serge Reggiani, Cecile Aubry.)

\***REGLE DU JEU, La** (Fairsham). Jean Renoir's (1940) masterpiece is a tragi-comedy of a decadent layer of French society. (Dalio, Jean Renoir. Carette.)

**SAMSON AND DELILAH** (Paramount). De Mille's biblical colossus, garnished with sex: mostly very vulgar. (Victor Mature, Hedy Lamarr.)

**SECRET FURY** (R.K.O.). Actor Mel Ferrer's debut as director with unlikely story of female pianist framed for murder and madness. (Claudette Colbert and Robert Ryan.)

**711 OCEAN DRIVE** (Columbia). Semi-documentary melodrama dedicated to exposure of crooked hookies in California: cut to pattern, but fast and quite exciting. (Edmond O'Brien, Joanne Dru: director, Joseph H. Newman.)

**TO PLEASE A LADY** (M.G.M.). Speeding thrills punctuate the romance of journalist Barbara Stanwyck and tough racing motorist Clark Gable. (Director, Clarence Brown.)

**VOLPONE** (G.C.T.). Peculiar, rather amateurishly mounted 1940 adaptation of Ben Jonson's comedy, carried through by some lively acting. (Harry Baur, Louis Jouvet, Charles Dullin: director, Maurice Tourneur.)

**UNDERCOVER GIRL** (G.F.D.). Alexis Smith as a policewoman out to clear her father's name: not recommended. (Scott Brady: director, Joseph Pevney.)

\***VIE COMMENCE DEMAÎN, La** (Blue Ribbon). A young man interrogates various celebrities on the subject of the future: with illuminating results from Sartre, Jean Rostand, Le Corbusier, and no change from Gide and Picasso (Director, Nicole Vedres.)

**WALK SOFTLY STRANGER** (R.K.O.). Drama of a gambler redeemed by pure love. (Valli, Joseph Cotten: director, Robert Stevenson.)

**WHERE DANGER LIVES** (R.K.O.). Mad husband-killer inveigles concussed doctor into flight across America. Unrewarding. (Robert Mitchum, Faith Domergue, Claude Rains: director, John Farrow.)

**WOMAN WITH NO NAME** (A.B.-Pathé). Phyllis Calvert as amnesia victim. Depressing. (Edward Underdown: director, Ladislav Vajda.)



# The Front Page

## The Big Money

THE TRADE POLLS conducted to discover the films most popular with British audiences in 1950 vary in detail, but provide a unanimous general guide to what the public most enjoyed during the year. The six most popular films were (in alphabetical order) *Annie Get Your Gun*, *The Blue Lamp*, *Happiest Days of Your Life*, *Odette*, *Treasure Island* and *The Wooden Horse*. The first and most outstanding fact about this is that four out of the six are British (a fifth, *Treasure Island*, being Anglo-American). The lists of runners-up in popularity show that in westerns and musicals the Americans maintain their usual lead, but a British comedy, a British melodrama and two wartime adventure stories take preference over anything that Hollywood has offered in these fields.

Without doubt this must be a highly encouraging and satisfying sign for the industry, and it could not come at a more urgent time. It is probably true that as a general rule audiences prefer what they consider good films made in their own country to good films from another; the emotional appeal of *The Wooden Horse* here is naturally stronger than that of *Battleground*, and the same can be said of *Odette* and *Three Came Home*. On the other hand, most people would rather see good films from America than bad ones from Britain, and for continuing prosperity an over-all level of success is necessary. In some genres, notably anything connected with spectacle, the British cinema has always been behind the American, but perhaps the most remarkable box-office winner of 1950 is *The Blue Lamp*. Gangster melodrama has hitherto also been a field of clear American supremacy, and probably for the first time a British product of this type has topped the polls. Our own opinion of this film has been fiercely contested, but quite apart from any critical controversy, *The Blue Lamp* is a major example of box-office flair in the British cinema of 1950 and will be generally recognised as such.

Other facts that emerge from the surveys of box-office takings are that lavish and spectacular musicals—*Annie Get Your Gun*, *Neptune's Daughter*—are more popular than adventurous ones like *On the Town* (Esther Williams, indeed, is apparently the most popular female star in Britain): synthetic westerns (*Winchester 73*, *Copper Canyon*) are preferred to the real thing (*She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*): and war films are still box-office. Apart from the British entries, there is a strong following for jingoistic American films like *Sands of Iwo Jima*, an appetite even more noticeable in America, where this film, *I Shall Return* and *Breakthrough* (not yet seen here) have been among the biggest money-makers of the year. By contrast, *The Men* does not appear to have gained the same favour. It remains to be seen if this trend will be reflected here during 1951.

Another American trend, which is almost certain to be followed here, is the popularity of spectacular adventure stories—*King Solomon's Mines*, *Samson and Delilah*, *The Black Rose*, *The Flame and the Arrow*. These films were not released in Britain until late 1950 (except for *The Black Rose*, which has been highly



successful) but they have found unusually large West End audiences. With *Quo Vadis*, *David and Bathsheba* and others to come, the American companies seem on rewarding ground here. Of the mammoths, *Samson and Delilah* represents the lowest ebb of vulgarity to which the screen has sunk for a long time. It seems likely that spectacle-addicts are fairly indiscriminating, and that so long as a film is big, coloured and eventful they will enjoy it; one hopes, at any rate, that de Mille's mixture of pseudo-religion and pseudo-sex is not especially appealing.

Beyond establishing the popularity of certain types of films, the results of the polls are rather baffling. One cannot imagine why, for instance, *Copper Canyon* should be better liked than *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*; others, such as *The Forsyte Saga*, seem to have nothing to recommend them except star value. The life story of Al Jolson continues its mysteriously profitable hold on the public in *Jolson Sings Again*, the ballyhoo of *Stromboli* (surely not the film itself?) carried it into the short list of runners-up, and is it a deep devotion to Ivor Novello or Dennis Price that ensures the success of *The Dancing Years*? In his comments on the financial year, the shrewd Josh Billings singles out two flops: *The Heiress* and *The Magnet*. The chilliness accorded to both of these is no more explicable than the enthusiasm which greeted a number of others.

A further question remains. We know which films make the most money: but—just to hand in passing the opportunity for a stinging comeback to the critics of SIGHT AND SOUND—from our own list last month of the best films of 1950, not one is mentioned even among the runners-up. How well, precisely, did these films fare? Films like *On the Town* and *Wagonmaster* are no doubt reasonably profitable, even if they do not emerge with honours: with *Intruder in the Dust* or *The Men* one is not so certain. This knowledge would in a way be even more important than the lists of box-office champions, because it would enable one to judge how far genuine experiment is practicable within the whole commercial framework, and what effects the box-office failure of an important film might have on future policy. While the magnitude of the audiences for *Jolson Sings Again* is now gauged, the box-office potential of the more discriminating "middle" audience has not begun to be explored. The Americans have made a start on this with their discovery that receipts from the first runs in big cities of *Sunset Boulevard* and *All About Eve* more than recouped costs in themselves. In Britain this potential obviously does not exist on the same scale; but if the desirable experiments in low-budget, high-quality film making, about which rumours are always flying, are to come about, it would be most valuable to try and estimate it.

### "This Modern Age"

Mr. Rank, a general shortening his line in the economic battle, has recently surrendered two of his outposts—the production of children's entertainment films, and *This Modern Age*. The latter's execution was announced some time ago

but the last (the forty-first) film of the series has only recently appeared in the cinemas. Called *Turkey—Key to the Middle East*, it typified the generally informed and conscientious level of screen journalism which the series had attained. *This Modern Age*'s faults were nearly always on the right side: its makers fell down when they tried to cram into twenty minutes screen time more information of a statistical kind than the mind could readily absorb. Pursuing a policy less highly coloured and opinionated than *The March of Time*, its concern has been less to present the facts with a lively, dogmatic slant than simply to present them, and to invite the audience to judge. Conspicuously successful in this way was *The True Face of Japan*.

It is clear that a series such as this needs time to establish itself: now that *This Modern Age* has emerged from its testing period, and according to the *Motion Picture Herald* box-office reports of 1950 had become in fact the most popular short series in British cinemas, it seems particularly regrettable that it can no longer find financial support.

The series owed its existence to the film industry's brief period of confident expansion: it was a courageous but unprofitable experiment, which did Mr. Rank considerable credit. In present circumstances, he has no alternative but to abandon it. The question remains, is there any basis on which this type of screen journalism can survive. The answer need not be state intervention. *March of Time*, after all, was established through *Time* and *Life* magazines, and may be thought to owe its positive, occasionally daring, approach to its association with them. No English newspaper or magazine of the calibre of, for instance, *Picture Post* has shown any interest in following the example, and it is too late to hope that private enterprise might yet come to the rescue of *This Modern Age*. Its style of unbiased, serious reportage is one that cinema and public can ill afford, at this moment, to lose.

### Cert X

The British Board of Film Censors' decision to replace the H certificate with the new category X—which will exclude children under 16 from films of adult treatment, which can thus be shown uncut—is a liberal and welcome move. It means first of all that foreign films shown in this country will be uncut, and that it will no longer be necessary to refuse licences to films like *Occupe-Toi d'Amélie* (which has now been granted an X). *La Vie Commence Demain*, with its scientific sequences of anatomical experiments and artificial insemination, can now be shown intact: Max Ophul's *La Ronde* will reach London, uncut, in the same category. The reaction of American companies remains to be seen: commercially it is obviously better for a film to be granted an A or U rather than an X certificate, and a certain amount of bargaining can be expected. But if companies decide to censor their own films in order to gain wider audiences, this will at least place the responsibility squarely on themselves. The present invidious position is ended.



# INTERVIEW WITH ROSSELLINI

Francis Koval

AT A PRESS CONFERENCE arranged for Roberto Rossellini before the showing of his new film at the Venice Festival last September, more than a hundred journalists were straining to catch his words. Although he sat immediately in front of a microphone his voice was hardly audible, and although the presence of himself and Ingrid Bergman was the major attraction of the day, nothing he said was definite enough to be really interesting. He seemed, in fact, to ignore the microphone and, by extension, the audience for whose benefit it was installed. The modulation of his voice gave the impression of a continuous shrug of the shoulders, and his apparent impassivity the effect of a straitjacket imposed upon his Italian temperament.

He grew a little more animated when the subject of his quarrel with R.K.O. was brought up. He had withdrawn *Stromboli* as an official competitor in the festival, he said, because it had been seriously mutilated by R.K.O., who refused his request for the original copy to be shown. At the end of the press conference, an Italian journalist came excitedly up to Rossellini's table, waving a newspaper in each hand. He wanted an explanation of the fact that Rossellini had told the reporter of his paper that the main purpose of his visit was the premiere of his film, while another Venice paper had published a statement by him that he and Ingrid would spend the evening away from the turmoil of the Lido.

Rossellini shrugged his shoulders. "What importance has all this? Maybe we shall be there, maybe we shan't . . ."

Some weeks later I found Rossellini in his flat in Rome, and he appeared more natural, less self-conscious. During the first half hour of the interview some diffidence and restraint were noticeable, but he warmed up later to a frank discussion.

"I am forty-four now", he said, "and I've been connected with films for nearly twenty years. At any rate, I've never worked at anything else. In my youth I had the great advantage of a wealthy father. So I could follow what I considered to be my vocation. As a matter of fact, my father owned a cinema in Rome, and as a schoolboy I spent disproportionately long hours in the stalls. It is difficult to say at what age exactly I succumbed to the fascination of the screen, but two unforgettable impressions from that period stand out from my mind: *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, and King Vidor's *The Crowd*".

Rossellini entered the film industry through the back door, as it were, of dubbing. In Fascist Italy, where the dubbing of all foreign films was compulsory (and where, incidentally, the censors used often to change the dialogue in the process), this was a very important field, and offered wide scope for acquiring technical skill in the handling of dialogue, actors and sound equipment. During the four years that Rossellini spent in the dubbing studios, he learned a great deal, and readily admits it. During this time he also made three short films, his first experience behind the camera.

In 1938 Rossellini's name was associated with the script of *Luciano Serra, Pilota*, a film shot under the personal supervision of Mussolini's son, Vittorio, which amounted to a



Rossellini with Franciscan brothers chosen for "*Francesco, Giullari di Dio*"

glorification of the Abyssinian war. There are many who today still hold this collaboration against him. It must in fairness be said, however, that at the time all press, radio and film activities were entirely controlled by the State and the Fascist party: consequently there are very few Italians who worked in any of these fields who did not at one time or another submit to external pressure.

A year later Rossellini's name aroused attention on an entirely non-political documentary film, *Fantasia Sottomarina*, which dealt with deep-sea fish. "This has nothing to do with the deep-sea fishing sequence in *Stromboli* . . . I concentrated on the more fantastic forms of underwater life, at that time I was attracted by the elements of fantasy, and most of my shorts had fantastic subjects".

On the strength of this documentary, Francesco de Robertis, the Italian specialist in naval films, engaged Rossellini as assistant for the script and direction of *La Nave Bianca*. This became a wartime success in Italy. *Un Pilota Ritorna* followed. But a violent disagreement developed between de Robertis and his assistant, with the result that Rossellini's name was removed from the credits. During our talk, Rossellini obviously did not want to mention this unpleasant incident, nor his subsequent feature film, *L'Invasore*. To his suspension by the professional organisation, "Consorzio dei Registri", which occurred in 1943, he referred in one sentence without any explanation. As far as one knows, he was not suspended for political reasons, but because of his efforts to extricate himself from his contract with Scalera Films in Rome.

Rossellini became more animated when the conversation reached *Rome, Open City* and his other postwar pictures. Work on *Rome, Open City* started when the Germans were still in occupation, and when Rossellini was a frequent guest at a shabby flat—the prototype of the one seen in the film—in which the scriptwriter Sergio Amidei and his communist friend Celeste Negarville were hiding. The latter, who has since become Mayor of Turin, was the basis for the character of the resistance chief played by Marcel Pagliero.

The vivid factual quality of *Rome, Open City* and, to a





Anna Magnani in "La Voce Umana", Rossellini's film of the Cocteau play

certain extent, of *Paisa*, made Rossellini's name widely famous. Talking about *Paisa*, I asked him about the anti-British slant which many people detected in two of the episodes. He protested vigorously against this:

"In Italy I have been called unpatriotic because the picture showed the degradation of Italian girls. Then I have been accused by the Catholics of ridiculing religion in the monastery episode. So I'm not really surprised that people in London lack the sense of humour to see the slight burlesque of the two officer types in the right perspective. As for the scathing reference to British military policy by one of the Po partisans, I can imagine that—separated from the political context of the time—it might sound offensive to the British. It must be remembered, though, that at the time Field-Marshal Alexander had issued a message to Italian partisans telling them to return to their homes and wait until the spring for Allied orders. He might not have realised that to any of these men, whose absence from home had been persistently investigated by the Germans, a return would have meant death or at least deportation to Germany. Hence a widespread resentment, which that characteristic remark of the partisan reflects . . .

"After all, I try to show human life such as it is on the screen, without fear or favour. I have often been attacked for what people call a "pessimistic attitude" in my pictures. But I am not a pessimist at all. I am only a realist, and I'm quite prepared to portray a world full of simple joy and serene happiness, if only we create such a world first. That is why I turned back to the world of St. Francis, who, despite the wickedness of the world, found joy where nowadays nobody seems to seek it—in humility and service."

It emerges at length that Rossellini, in all his postwar films, has tried to approach from different angles a single pre-occupying problem. In his own words, it is the problem of faith as an essential part of human life.

"In *Rome, Open City* and *Paisa*, all the acts of heroism or human kindness obviously spring from faith, and the brutalities of war from cynicism and absence of moral code. In the tragic emptiness of the postwar world shown in *Germany Year Zero*, the struggle between faith and mere opportunism is still more accentuated. For the child standing unconsciously between the two extremes, it is a tightrope balancing act. In *Stromboli*, the girl, who in the cruel, corrupt world of concentration camps, has lost her faith, regains it in the hour of supreme castigation—when revolting against the

God in whose existence she had refused to believe".

The attempt (which has rather miscarried) at reviving St. Francis of Assisi for the present-day world must, then, be regarded as a continuation of this line of thought. Even then the intentions of this strange film, composed of eleven loosely knit episodes following the pattern of "The Little Flowers", are difficult to understand. When Rossellini asked my opinion of it, I confessed that at many points I was bewildered by the film, and that I would appreciate any illumination from him.

"I didn't intend for a moment to make a biographical film", he said. "The personality of St. Francis is so immense that it would be impossible to do him justice within the framework of a film of normal length. That is why I confined myself to a single aspect of his personality. You mustn't forget that the title of the film is *Francesco, Giullare di Dio*, which means "Jester of God". So, the accent is entirely on St. Francis' whimsical, unruffled approach to the crudities and trivialities of everyday life".

"Do you think the public in Venice reacted to the picture as you expected—laughing in the right places?"

"Of course they did. I was deeply touched by their appreciation, and I am sure the public everywhere will react in the same way".

Quite a few critics expressed an opposite opinion after the premiere. As a matter of fact, the reviews of St. Francis were rather shattering. But Rossellini remained undismayed. As with his previous films, he feels that he has expressed exactly what he wanted to express, and if the world lacks understanding of his work it is really a great pity. "I know that many people, particularly my colleagues, strongly criticise my method of work—or, as they say, its lack of method. It is quite true that I sometimes start a film only with a rough outline of the script, that I often make up dialogue and change scenes as I go along. I don't see why I should change my habits. Does anybody tell a painter which brushes to use, and how to mix colours so that they may conform to conventional rules? Why interfere, then, with a film director's freedom?"

"I regard the technique of film making, anyhow, as something secondary, and all the highly modern technical equipment I saw in Hollywood impressed me very little. The content of a picture is to me infinitely more important than its technical perfection".

Before leaving, I asked Rossellini about his plans for making a film with Bette Davis (about which there had been rumours in the press) and a new one with his wife.

"I am a great admirer of Bette Davis", Rossellini said, "and in fact a project for getting her over to Italy has been under discussion. I would love to make a film with her, but frankly I haven't so far found a story worthy of her talent. As for Ingrid—that's a different matter. Although born and bred in Rome, I seem in some respects to have a Sicilian mentality. I simply hate to think that my wife should work, and so take from me the privilege of providing for the family . . . But if one day I should come across a part of the dimensions of Karin in *Stromboli*, that no other actress in the world could play better than Ingrid—well, I may change my mind".

Rossellini was chatting about family matters as I left, and describing not without amusement the pranks of his 10 year old son, whose attitude towards his tiny step-brother, Robertino, appears to be one of strong affection mixed with some diffidence and jealousy. "He is very receptive, and a quick-witted little devil", Rossellini said. "The other day he came home from a cinema and said: 'Daddy, I have just seen one of your films. It wasn't bad at all, but I kept asking myself why you always try to appear so frightfully clever?'"





W. C. Fields with Baby LeRoy, and in scene from "The Old-Fashioned Way"

## TOBY JUG AND BOTTLE

Ken Tynan

IF YOU HAD BEEN VISITING Philadelphia in the winter of 1892, and had wanted to buy a newspaper, you would have stood a good chance of having mild hysterics, and a story to dine out on in after years. W. C. Fields, then a frowning urchin of thirteen, was spending a few halcyon months peddling papers; and his manner of vending contained already the germs of a technique which later made him one of the two or three funniest men in the world. While other lads piped about wars and football, Fields would pick on a five-line fill-in at the bottom of a page and, quite disenchantedly, hawk it at the top of his voice. "Bronislaw Gimp acquires licence for two-year-old sheepdog!" he would bellow at passers-by, adding unnecessarily: "Details on page 26!" And by the tone of his voice, his latest biographer\* tells us, you would gather that Gimp was an arch criminal, for Fields trusted no-one. A flabby scowl sat squarely on his face—the same scowl that we see in the curious portrait with which John Decker celebrated the comedian's sixtieth birthday: with a doily on his head and a silver salt-cellar balanced on top of that he sits, squinting dyspeptically at the camera, perfectly well aware of the profanity of the caption: "Sixty Years a Queen". Fields disliked and suspected most of his fellow-creatures to the end of his life: his face would work in convulsive tics as he spoke of them. For sixty-seven years he played duck's back to their water, until on Christmas Day, 1946, the "fellow in the bright nightgown" (as he always referred to death) sneaked up on him and sapped him for good.

"W. C. Fields, his Follies and Fortunes" is certainly the

\*"W. C. Fields, His Follies and Fortunes," by Robert Lewis Taylor. (Cassell, 16/-).

best book we are likely to see about this droll and grandiose comic. Robert Lewis Taylor is a graduate of the *New Yorker*, and thus a master of the Harold Ross prose style—pungent and artless, innocently sly, superbly explicit: what one would call low-falutin'. Like all the *New Yorker's* best profiles, this picture of Fields is composed with a sort of childish unsentimentality, the candour of a liquorous quiz kid. Taylor, having inscribed Fields' name glowingly on the roll of fame, beats him over the head with it. Except that he sometimes calls a mistress a "friend", he spares us little. We learn of Fields' astonishing consumption of alcohol (two quarts of gin a day, apart from wines and whiskey); of his quite sincere cruelty (his favourite sequence was one in which he took his small niece to a fun fair and parked her "for safety" in the shooting gallery); of his never wholly cured habit of pilfering (on his first visit to England he strolled around stealing poultry hanging out in front of shops; it was his tribute to the salesmanship of the proprietors and, as he indignantly added: "You don't think I'd have stolen chickens in the Balkans, do you"?); of his jovial callousness towards his friends, towards most women, and towards the clergy. One rainy night Fields, fairly far gone, was driving home waving a gin bottle in his free hand, and generously gave a lift to a hitch-hiker. The man was outraged when Fields offered him a drink and, explaining that he was a clergyman, went on to deliver a free sermon to the comedian—"I'll give you my number four", he said, "called 'The Evils of Alcohol' ". He was well into his stride when Fields nonchalantly pulled up alongside a hedge, kicked the man out, dropped a bottle of gin after him, and roared: "That's my number three—'How to keep warm in a ditch'!"





"It's a Gift". Kathleen Howard, W. C. Fields

Equally savage was his exchange with a bartender in *My Little Chickadee*. "You remember the time I knocked down Waterfront Nell?" he said. The barman, pretty angrily, replied: "Why, you didn't knock her down, I did". "Well", Fields went on, unperturbed; "I started kicking her first". He once genially condescended to teach an acquaintance of his, against whom he bore some slight grudge, a simple juggling trick requiring two paring knives. "I hope he worked at it", said Fields afterwards: "because if he did, he was almost certain to cut himself very painfully".

Some of the managements for whom he worked complained about such jests as these. Fields never lost his temper on such occasions. "We must strive", he would say thoughtfully, "to instruct and uplift as well as entertain". And eyeing them carefully, he would light a cigar.

About all this Mr. Taylor is quaintly frank; and he is even better at describing (for nobody could ever explain) the mysterious caverns of private humour in which Fields delighted. There was the two-reeler entitled *The Fatal Glass Of Beer* which he did for Mack Sennett: it opened with Fields sitting on a campstool in a far Northern shack, wearing a coonskin coat and crooning to himself. From time to time he would get up, open the door, and cry: "'Tain't a fit night out for man nor beast!", whereupon an extra would pelt him in the face with a handful of snow. There was hardly any other dialogue in the film.

Fields nearly always wrote his own stories (under pen-names such as Mahatma Kane Jeeves), and would drive studio chiefs to despair by his failure to understand that the fact that he appeared in every shot did not necessarily ensure continuity of plot-line. Still, he continued to scrawl plots on the backs of old laundry bills and get \$25,000 a time for them.

Often he would wander through the streets wearing a false beard, his repulsive clip-in moustache and an opera cape, and amble into any party he saw in progress, introducing himself as "Doctor Hugo Sternhammer, the Viennese anthropologist". He first did this during the 1914-18 war. "I remember telling one woman that the Kaiser was my third cousin", he mused: "she gave a little scream and ran like hell". His treatment of women often bordered on the fantastic: finding strange, unaccountable depths of hilarity in the Chinese, he made one of his mistresses dress in satin slippers and a split black skirt, and always called her "The Chinaman". Many of his letters to his last mistress and devoted nurse, Carlotta Monti, start out "Dear Chinese People", and are signed, even more bewilderingly: "Continental Person", or "Ampico J. Steini-

way". He liked ordering Chinese meals in his films: in *International House* (for Paramount in 1932), he seated himself like a khan and blandly asked for: "A couple of hundred-year-old eggs boiled in perfume".

Fields enraged most people he worked with. Mae West still remembers how stunned she was when, in the middle of a take, he benignly adlibbed: "And how is my little brood mare?" He worked first for Mack Sennett and later for Universal and M.G.M. (most notoriously in *David Copperfield*, in which he was narrowly restrained from doing his entire juggling routine): but after he left Ziegfeld's "Follies" in 1921, we are probably most indebted to Paramount, who suffered under him through twenty-one movies, including *Tilly and Gus*, *If I Had a Million*, *Six of a Kind*, *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch*, *Mississippi* and *The Man on the Flying Trapeze*. Much of the time they had to fight to keep him from cursing during takes: in retaliation he devised two expressions, "Godfrey Daniel!" and "Mother of Pearl!", with which he baffled the Hays Office for more than a decade. They granted him a salary so spectacular that even Bing Crosby raised his eyebrows and, by their unearthly tolerance, they allowed him to turn out a series of films which must rank amongst the least money-making comedy classics in cinema history. At last he left them, his powers quite unimpaired, and went to Universal for his last four pictures, *You Can't Cheat an Honest Man*, *My Little Chickadee*, *The Bank Dick*, and the amazing *Never Give a Sucker an Even Break*—the last two of which probably represent the height of his achievement. They were made between 1938 and 1942, when Fields was moving reluctantly into his sixties. Someday they should be revived by the film societies, for in addition to being amongst the funniest films of a good period, they are splendid illustrations of the art of film-making without portfolio, or cinematic actor-management.

The function of a director in a Fields movie was clear right from the start. He either fought with or ignored them. He would reduce such men as Leo McCarey, Norman McLeod, George Marshall and even George Cukor to impotent hysterics of rage by his incorrigible adlibbing, his affectation of deafness whenever they suggested the slightest alteration in any of his lines or routines, and by his jubilant rudeness to anyone else who happened to be working in the neighbourhood. (Once, when it became known that Deanna Durbin was on a nearby lot and might be audible on clear days, Fields threatened "to get a good bead from the upstairs balcony and shoot her".) The only director to whose advice he ever paid attention was Gregory La Cava. "Dago bastard!" he would growl as, fretfully, he listened to La Cava's analyses of his gifts: yet he admitted that the director was in the right when he implored Fields not to work too hard for his laughs. What La Cava said is worth quoting, for it is acute and provides some sort of key to Fields' later methods. "You're not a natural comedian, Bill", he said; "You're a counter-puncher. You're the greatest straight man that ever lived. It's a mistake for you ever to do the leading. When you start to bawl out and ham around and trip over things, you're pushing. I hate to see it". He said that in 1934.

La Cava was correct, as Fields' maturer films show. Fields quiescent and smouldering is funnier than Fields rampant and yelling. He played straight man to a malevolent universe which had singled him out for siege and destruction. He regarded the conspiracy of fate through a pair of frosty little blue eyes, an arm flung up to ward off an imminent blow, and his shoulders instinctively hunched in self-protection. It is hard to imagine him without the "As I suspected" look with



which he anticipates disaster. Always his face looked injured (as indeed it was: the nose was ruddy and misshapen not through drink, but from the beatings he received in his youth); he would talk like an old lag, watchfully, using his antic cigar almost as a cudgel. Puffy, gimlet-eyed, and magnificently alarmed, he would try to outwit the agents of calamity with sheer pomp, and invariably fail. Everything he says, even the most crushing insult, is uttered as if it were a closely guarded secret: he *admits* a line rather than speaks it. Only his alcoholic aplomb remains unpersecuted: that they cannot touch, theseimps who plague him. Fields breakfasting with his screen family behaves with all the wariness of Micawber unexpectedly trapped in Fagin's thieves' kitchen. His face lights up only rarely, at the sight of something irresistibly and universally ludicrous, like a blind man. One remembers his efforts, in the general-store sequence of *It's a Gift*, to prevent a deaf and blind customer from knocking over things with his stick while Fields is attending to other clients. It was unforgettable, the mechanical enthusiasm of those brave, happy cries: "Sit down, Mr. Muckle, Mr. Muckle, please sit down!" (a stack of electric light bulbs crashes to the floor) "Mr. Muckle, honey, *please sit down!*"

His nose, resembling a doughnut pickled in vinegar or an eroded squash ball, was unique; but so, too, was his voice. He both looked and sounded like a cement mixer. He would screw up his lips to one side and purse his eyes before committing himself to speech; and then he would roll vowels around his palate as if it were a sieve with which he was prospecting for nuggets. The noise that finally emerged was something quietly raucous, like the crowing of a very lazy cock. (If you substitute "Naw" for "No, Sir", and cast Fields as Johnson, most of Boswell becomes wildly amusing, as well as curiously characteristic.) Fields' voice, nasal, tinny, and massively bored, is that of a prisoner who has been uselessly affirming his innocence in the same court for centuries: when, in *It's a Gift*, he drives a carload of people straight into a large reproduction of the Venus de Milo, his response as he surveys the fragments is unhesitating. "Ran right in front of the car", he murmurs, a little wearily.

The recent revival at the Carlton of *It's a Gift* (Norman McLeod for Paramount, 1934) was received gratefully by students of Fields' middle period. He does little heavy wooing in it, and robs surprisingly few people, but most of his other traits are well represented. The cigar is there; so is the straw hat, which nervously deserts him at moments of crisis, and has to be retrieved and jammed back on to the large, round head which squats, Humpty-Dumpty-like, on the oddly boyish shoulders. There is Fields' old rival, Baby LeRoy, to spill a barrel of molasses, described by the comedian in a famous line as "spreadingest stuff I ever saw in m' life". (To a friend who enquired the name of his new co-star, Fields replied: "Fellow named LeRoy. Says he's a baby". He once put half a pint of gin into the child's orange juice, inducing a total collapse which Fields greeted with shouts of: "Walk him around! Send him home! The kid's no trouper!") There is Kathleen Howard, the Fieldsian equivalent to Margaret Dumont, sneering with her wonderful baritone clarity at his "scheme to revive the celluloid collar". And there is the long and savoury sequence in which Fields, driven by Miss Howard's nocturnal scolding to seek sleep on the verandah, is kept awake by such things as a coconut rolling down a fire-escape, a squeaking clothes-line, an insurance salesman (who asks "Are you a Mr. Karl LaFong, capital K small A small R small L capital L small A capital F small O small N small G?"), the whirr of bottles in a milk-crate, a "vegetable gentleman" selling calabashes, and, of course, by Baby LeRoy, who drops grapes from above into the comedian's mouth. "Shades of Bacchus!" mutters Fields, removing the eleventh.

In the same programme as *It's a Gift* was a revival of *Monkey Business*, which the Fields section of the audience took in glacial silence, because this is scriptbound comedy, the comedy of quotability. Groucho owes much to Perelman: Fields owes nothing to anyone, except dubiously Harry Tate. Fields strolls out of the frame into the theatre, while the Brothers remain silhouettes. Fields' fantasy has its roots in the robust soil of drunken reverie: theirs are in the hothouse of nightmare. They will resort to razors and thumbscrews to get laughs which Fields would have got with a rolled-up



"It's a Gift"



newspaper. Their comic style is only comparable with his in that, as Mr. Taylor notes, "most people harbour a secret affection for anyone with a low opinion of humanity". It is nowhere recorded what Fields thought of them, but it is possible to guess. Hearing them described: "Possibly a squad of gipsies", he would grunt, pronouncing the "g" hard as in gruesome.

Fields is pre-eminently a man's comedian. Women never become addicts of his pictures, and it is no coincidence that his friends (John Barrymore, Ben Hecht, Gene Fowler, Dave Chasen, Grantland Rice) were all men. He belongs inseparably to the poolroom and the bar-room—though rarely to the smoking-room; and though he looked like a brimming Toby Jug, it was always clear that no mantelpiece would hold him. Few wives drag their husbands to see his films, which may partly explain their persistently low profits. Like Sid Field, he rejected pathos to the last, even when working with child stars: he refused to tap the feminine audience by the means

which Chaplin used in *The Kid*. It is appalling, indeed, to reflect what Fields might have done to Jackie Coogan, a less resilient youth than LeRoy. Perhaps it is a final judgment on him that no self-respecting mother will ever allow her children to read Mr. Taylor's brilliant book—a chronicle of meanness, fraud, arrogance and alcoholism.

We know, by the way, Fields' opinion of Chaplin. Late in life he was lured to a cinema where some of the little man's early two-reelers were being shown. The laughter inside was deafening, and halfway through Fields uneasily left. His companion found him outside in the car at the end of the show, and asked what he thought of Chaplin's work. "The son of a bitch is a ballet dancer", said Fields.

"He's pretty funny, don't you think?" his friend went on doggedly.

"He's the best ballet dancer that ever lived", said Fields, "and if I get a good chance I'll kill him with my bare hands".



## The Seventh Art



The Egyptian government has banned the film *Samson and Delilah*, on the grounds that Delilah was "a paid spy of the Israelites". The showing of the film is considered "undesirable because Egypt does not recognize the existence of Israel". (Report in *Daily Telegraph*.)



Clare Luce wrote a political story titled *A Spark in the Night* with many scenes behind the Iron Curtain. It never quite jelled, but that title will be used on a sequel to *Come to the Stable*, which 20th Century bought. Sam Engel will produce, with Loretta Young and Celeste Holm playing the roles they created. The two nuns . . . move on to Hiroshima after the atom bomb falls, but the story will have a comedy approach similar to the original picture. (Hedda Hopper in the *Los Angeles Times*.)



He had brown eyes that looked up pleadingly at you. He had tricks and affections and a tail that thumped the carpet. And Mrs. Florence L. Peschel of Denver, Colorado, put his value to her at £44,628. That is the sum for which she is suing Paramount Pictures, who she says "obtained" her fox terrier dog, Tippy . . . Her lawyer claims that Tippy acted as a foil to Bing (in the *Emperor Waltz*). Now he says Mrs. Peschel no longer has her dog—"a real tragedy". (*Daily Graphic*.)

Ruth Roman, Warner Bros. star of *Three Secrets*, has been named "Miss Streamline" for 1950 by the Pacific Southwestern System of the National Model Railroad Association. The American organisation so designated the star because she "personifies the exciting streamlined speed of modern railroading". (Publicity Handout.)



Nine girls out of ten like to get slapped by the men in their lives. With this clue given to him by a professional psychologist, Dan Duryea is beginning to understand now why his fan mail drops off if he ventures into a romantic role instead of his customary heavy-handed, tight-lipped characterisations . . . Duryea himself revealed another facet of the feminine desire to be pushed around by men. He said that there is a large section of the female population who go to see him simply because he is the type they want to reform, and this urge is so strong that they have formed a "Reform Dan Duryea" club and are among his most active fans. (Publicity Handout.)



The picture (*Bitter Rice*), however, is designed solely for mature, adult audiences who patronise the art theatres, since the story deals with sadism, rape, elicit love, murder and suicide. (Review in *Motion Picture Herald*.)



# NOTES ON A RENAISSANCE

*The Italian Cinema*

Gavin Lambert



Visconti's "Ossessione". Clara Calamai, Massimo Girotti

THE EMERGENCE OF SEVERAL remarkably talented film-makers in Italy during the last five years has been for some time a major topic of criticism; it has given birth to almost as many inaccurate references to the neo-realist movement as has Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer to a misplaced gibe at Hollywood. One reason for this is the very fragmentary representation of the postwar Italian cinema in this country—and, for that matter, of Italy's prewar films, not all of which were as indifferent as they seem traditionally assumed to be. At the moment, only two directors have been adequately represented here (and one, Luigi Zampa, more than adequately): first of all Rossellini, who later suffered from over-estimation when the superior talent of de Sica was recognised, and is now perhaps in some quarters unduly despised. The rest are little more than names. Lattuada has gained some acknowledgment through his early *Delitto di Giovanni Episcopo* (retitled *Flesh Will Surrender*) and his more recent *Senza Pieta*; de Santis has been almost eclipsed by his own discovery, Silvana Mangano. Here, on this side of the channel, the neo-realist case rests. Further evidence is practically a secret in the hands of a few people who may have seen other films abroad, and of a few hundred who were fortunate enough to see another important half-dozen at a Festival presented last year by the London Film Club.

This evidence, and some more gained on a visit to Italy, provides the argument for what follows. The knowledge that it is incomplete—that only a comprehensive acquaintance with Italian films over the last fifteen years could make it anything else—has made me offer it in the less conclusive form of a series of notes. The focus will be more on individual figures than collective development, and generalisation more than usually dangerous. But the recent achievements of the Italian cinema as a whole may by implication, I hope, be seen in a perspective.

## I

It may be as well to start with a reminder of the earlier history of the Italian cinema. This is a history mainly of disastrous grandiloquence. The tradition of vast historical (often biblical) reconstruction was formed in the early years of the century, and reached two spectacular climaxes: *Quo Vadis* in 1911 and

*Cabiria* in 1913. The influence of these films, which in effect discovered the potentialities of spectacle on the screen, on Griffith's *Intolerance*, on Lubitsch's early costume extravaganzas, on de Mille and the Niblo of *Ben Hur* (actually made in Italy, like the remake of *Quo Vadis*) is now generally acknowledged. One cannot but admire their pioneering zest and technical vigour, however reprehensible aesthetically; the vitality, unfortunately, soon dwindled, and the remaining fifteen years of Italian silent films are composed of a monstrous kind of bad taste derived mainly from second-rate literature and drama. Many renowned actresses of the theatre are placed on the screen and ludicrously overplay *femmes fatales* in highly perfumed stories of adultery and thwarted passion. The decors—great barn-like salons loaded with statuary, ferns and hangings—are stifling, and the proportion of suicides in the last reel very high. The favourite ending of huge, distracted females with streaming hair plunging a dagger into their bosoms is probably a minor piece of social documentation of the period. The only opposition to this activity was offered by a group of persistent critics, notably Riccioto Canudo, the perceptive and neglected author of *L'Usine aux Images*, who invented the terms 'the seventh art' and 'photogenic'; alive to other developments in the cinema, they tirelessly indicated them, and in the early 'thirties this awareness became apparent in the work of two directors, Mario Camerini, who established a style of film-making from which the Italian cinema we know today is directly descended, and Alessandro Blasetti, in whose films the human element is usually slight, but who soon displayed unusual technical gifts.

The debt of some contemporary Italian directors to Camerini is indeed considerable, as in turn was Camerini's to René Clair. His early sound comedies, with their slight romantic stories, their irony, gaiety and songs, their popular atmosphere and use of natural locations, may not have been first rate, but to judge from one of them, *Gli Uomini che Mascalzoni!*, they had an attractive freshness and style. This is the story of a young chauffeur who falls in love with a shop girl at first sight, pursues her and manages to persuade her to spend a day in the country; they go off in a borrowed car, dance at a lakeside cafe; an accident and a misunderstanding





Left: three scenes from Camerini's "*Gli Uomini che Mascalcioni*", with de Sica and Lya Franca. Right: the two faces of Blasetti, Fabrizi in "*Prima Comunione*" and a crowd grouping from "*Fabiola*"

follows, resolved after a number of episodes when they meet again at the Milan Fair. Out of this slender, agreeable material Camerini made a charming sentimental comedy.

The introduction of human qualities, of natural settings and a light, fluent technique completely opposed to the theatricalities of the 'twenties, was in itself considerable enough. Another fortunate discovery by Camerini was that of Vittorio de Sica, who played in a number of his films and became Italy's most popular romantic actor. *Gli Uomini che Mascalcioni*! shows that de Sica had all the attributes of a popular hero—youth, good looks, charm, impudent humour, a pleasant singing voice: the performance is irresistible.

Others, later to become notable writers or directors, worked in the 'thirties with Camerini. Mario Soldati collaborated on the script of *Gli Uomini*, Cesare Zavattini and Renato Castellani on succeeding ones. Now 55, Camerini is still making films today, though *Molti Sogni per le Strade*, a recent comedy with Magnani, suggests that the original freshness of touch is unhappily deserting him. But the extent of his influence on Italian film-making, as a leader and explorer of

talent, is undeniable.

The simultaneous career of Blasetti has been in marked contrast. It suggests personality with very few original ideas, erratic taste, but a natural flair for the medium, willing to try his hand at anything. He made his first film in 1928, at the age of 28, after four years as a critic. In spirit he seems to have remained closest to the grandiose tradition, but his technical abilities—and sometimes his scriptwriters—have helped him to disguise a rather static talent. Many of his films have been large historical reconstructions, from *1860* to *Fabiola*, and he was the first Italian director to use Technicolor, in 1938.

*1860*, which Blasetti made in 1933, clearly exposes his aptitude for pageantry. A film about Garibaldi (who does not appear in it), with a loose dramatic framework about a shepherd who goes through enemy lines to find the leader and bring him back with the famous thousand for the final battle, it is full of strikingly composed, heroic shots, impressively deployed crowds, sweeping images. The narrative continuity is vague, the story hardly *told* at all. Blasetti appears to have little capacity for narrative as such. *1860* concludes with a



great battle, magnificent both in images and sound, but difficult to follow. The pretentious style contrasted oddly with the actors, who were all non-professionals with simple, authentic peasant faces.

In 1942 Blasetti was offered a script by Zavattini. He was not at first impressed by it, but decided to use it when other plans fell through. The result was *Four Steps in the Clouds*. This film had a considerable vogue in Europe after the war, and was indeed accepted as a product of the new renaissance begun by de Sica and others. A modest little comedy about a middle-aged business man with a wife and child who has a brief idyll with a country girl and then returns to his humdrum town existence, it begins charmingly with a description of early morning domestic rituals and the man's journey on an overcrowded train: but with his arrival in the country, rustic humours become too heavy-handed, the tenderness and delicate irony implicit in the subject are not attained. As a result of the film's success, however, Blasetti became a devotee of realism. He made *Un Giorno nella Vita*, a war film about a group of partisans forced to take refuge in a convent, again with a script by Zavattini: most of this is crude and theatrical. With *Fabiola* he returned to historical spectacle. His most recent film, again scripted by Zavattini, is *Prima Comunione*, a return to the manner of *Four Steps*, with traces of Clair. A domestic comedy centred on the pursuit of a young girl's white dress, mislaid on the morning of her first communion, it is the kind of subject Camerini might once have chosen. The girl's father, played by Fabrizi, is a rich, comic portrait of a self-important bourgeois, and some of the happiest moments occur when his wish-fulfilment fantasies take over from reality. Although Fabrizi overplays at times and some of the minor characters are allowed to go out of control, the film is better sustained than *Four Steps*, and much more stylishly made. Zavattini's script, loaded with incidents, obliges a concentration on narrative: there is a delightful score by Cicognini, one of the best Italian film composers (who worked with Blasetti on several of his prewar films, and on *Four Steps*, and with de Sica on *Sciuscia*). *Prima Comunione* is the third example of the collaboration between Zavattini and Blasetti, and the best. Whether Blasetti continues to explore this vein, or plunges back into a historical fresco, is unpredictable.

## II

The Italians do not appear to have produced any really

outstanding films during the 'thirties, though in perspective the revival of intention is not insignificant. Apart from actual film-making, the founding of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in 1935, by Luigi Chiarini, was another sign of the vitality of the period. From this film school in Rome a number of directors have since emerged, notably Lattuada and de Santis, and also the prolific Zampa. This Centro Sperimentale was a further manifestation of the nationalised Italian cinema. Mussolini's regime had already created a large annual subsidy for film production, had built the Cinecittà studios, which are among the best equipped in Europe, founded the Istituto Nazionale L.U.C.E., responsible for documentary production, and for which Rossellini made his first films, and endowed the Venice Film Festival.

The ground, it can thus be seen, was prepared, and from 1940 onwards, the official patriotic productions apart, several directors continued to probe realistic subjects with films that are still unknown in this country to day. The collapse of a regime, the end of a war, produced the necessary liberation. The first effect of this was seen abroad in Rossellini's *Open City* and *Paisa*, films of undoubted vividness which perhaps suffered later from admirers who elevated necessities into virtues. *Sciuscia* signalled the existence of a new and more substantially gifted director; if the barrier of war had not prevented us from seeing some of de Sica's earlier work, this would have come as less of a surprise.

On the evidence of three films alone, de Sica can be considered the most impressive figure in the Italian cinema. The first of these is *I Bambini ci Guardano* (*The Children are Watching Us*), made in 1943, a film startling in its native land both as the first serious work of its director and for the painful accuracy of its social observation. At this time it was not possible in Italy for a non-fascist to make a serious film with direct contemporary references, and the social territory explored in *I Bambini ci Guardano* would have been as valid in the 'thirties as it is still today. The film, adapted by six writers including Zavattini and de Sica, from a novel by Cesare Giulio Viola, is concerned with the effect on a four-year-old child of his mother—a soft, sensual, kind but weak-minded woman—deserting his father. He is a silent witness to a lovers' meeting in the park; when his mother runs away, he is first of all left at his aunt's lingerie establishment, then stays in the country with his grandmother. One night he sees his young cousin meeting her lover on the beach,



Social satire in "*I Bambini ci Guardano*". The aunt's lover, and gossiping neighbours



and accidentally upsets a flower-pot on her head; he has to leave his new home in disgrace. For his sake his parents are reunited, but on holiday by the sea the influence of fashionable people on his mother, the reappearance of the lover when the father has to return to his business, drives the child to a state of panic. He runs away, is found and brought back. From his agonised silences his father guesses what has happened. After sending the lonely, frightened boy away to school, he kills himself. In an almost unbearable last scene the child refuses the consolation of his mother, and we see him walking away down the long hall of the school—Joveless, apparently friendless, and incapable of speech.

Although the film is episodic to the point of untidiness—an inevitable result, perhaps, of the prevalent Italian habit of scripting by committee—its intensity and sometimes harsh conviction are undeniable. The scenes in the aunt's workroom and at the holiday resort, the sketches of prying neighbours, are sharp and bitter; their high quality of observation, and de Sica's handling of the players—most of all the child, who gives a performance at times as overwhelming as the children in his later films, and at times more painful—clearly point to the remarkable nature of a talent that was to be widely discussed a few years later.

The two following films, *Sciuscia* and *Bicycle Thieves*, have, like all of Rossellini's shown in this country, had much written about them; but perhaps a few remarks about them in relation to de Sica's work as a whole may not be repititious. *Bicycle Thieves* is the most complete achievement of the three, though parts of *I Bambini* are, I think, as good as anything de Sica has yet done. *Sciuscia* continues the view of children twisted and victimised by social pressures, this time the chaotic aftermath of war. The story of two shoeshine boys who drift into crime, are sent to a squalid and under-staffed institution which destroys their love for each other, ends with the death of one of them after a tragic scene of betrayal. Perhaps because the whole of the second half, a study of relationships between the inmates of the remand home, is slightly out of focus—finely observed as it is, the relation to the outside world is lost and the film contracts rather than expands—and because the ending itself is not without contrivance, it appears less final than the equivalent scene in *I Bambini*. But once again the single lonely figure is abandoned without any mitigating gesture.

*Bicycle Thieves*, which Zavattini alone scripted in collaboration with de Sica, is the most carefully shaped and conceived of the three films. The ending is a reversal of the closing scenes of the other two: in the face of extreme adversity the son comes to a new, unspoken and intense understanding with his father. This delineation of a gradually shifting and finally crystallising relationship between father and son is to me the most striking part of *Bicycle Thieves*; the emotional tension in the second half—in which the emphasis, until the last moments, is directly on the search for the bicycle—is less completely sustained. The second half is more a succession of episodes, the chase through the brothel, the discovery of the real thief, and the father suddenly stealing a bicycle himself, and is not without the touches of contrivance that one notices in the earlier films. Because the style throughout has great concentration and economy, this relaxed tension is not immediately apparent; but the development of the later passages is not, I think, equal to that of the earlier ones. *Bicycle Thieves* was greeted here as a kind of masterpiece in isolation—*Sciuscia* had been praised, but not on the whole as

warmly as Rossellini: the question of perspective in criticism is a difficult one, but it can be said that in relation to de Sica's earlier films, *Bicycle Thieves*, though it is more controlled, more unified, more perfected, is not greater in the qualities of feeling or observation.

There is also one other point that is worth raising, even though it cannot be answered. All three films, though the conclusion of the last is different, hinge on the suffering of a child. One might say, all three were made *at the expense of the actual suffering* of a child. De Sica's handling of children is no conjuring trick of *The Fallen Idol* kind. The intensity he extracts from them can only be the result of fairly violent emotional pressure. In spite of this intensity, one does not feel a particularly close identification with the child in any of the films: one recognises the truth of the observation, the extraordinary intuitive power, that—in *I Bambini*, at any rate—is so accurate that it becomes painful to witness. When an adult player conveys a deep emotion, we accept it as a feat of imagination and technique, but with a child the latter element has to be discarded, and the former is not certain. It may be asked, then, how much of the emotion conveyed by de Sica's children is that of the drama itself, and how much of it comes from something different, something outside the dramatic context—the spectacle of helpless grief and pain on the part of any child?

### III

The two directors who, after de Sica, are probably the most important in Italian films today are not generally known in this country. In the case of Luchino Visconti this is not altogether surprising, since he has only made two films, and the first of these can no longer be shown owing to copyright difficulties. *Osessione* (1943) was an adaptation of James M. Cain's "The Postman Always Rings Twice". Since the rights of the novel were never obtained, and M.G.M. bought them a year of two later, Visconti's film has not been shown (except privately) since the war. Italian and French critics who have seen it, rate the film very high in spite of excessive length and uncertain structure. It is generally regarded as a precursor of the realist style that emerged after the war: "the miracle of *Osessione*", Antonio Pietrangeli has written, "is to allow us to witness the birth of a style; a style of wholly personal quality, in which the influence of a personal culture and lessons drawn from the experience of his elders are perfectly assimilated and re-formed; a style which reveals a new attitude and a new sensibility, as much as in its gift of perception as in its ability to re-create".

In the '30's, Visconti had been Jean Renoir's assistant, on *Les Bas Fonds* and *Partie de Campagne*. On the evidence of his second film, *La Terra Trema* (of which only the first part has been completed), his style, highly individual though it is, seems to have followed Renoir in certain directions—in the breadth of vision, the impatience with form, and in particular technical preferences, notably long, atmospheric, tracking shots. The setting of *La Terra Trema* is Sicily, the players are fishermen chosen on the spot. When Visconti began work on the film in early 1948 it was planned to be in three parts: the basis was a novel by Verga, "I Malavoglia", though this is not acknowledged on the credits. The first part was to be on the Sea, the second on the Sulphur Mines, the third on the Countryside. Visconti completed only the first part, and has apparently abandoned the rest of the project. *La Terra Trema* remains a fragment, incomplete but magnificent.





I Bambini  
ci Guardano





The story is developed at leisure, and with an occasional absence of clarity. It serves to knit loosely together a study of a fisherman's family weighed down and slowly disintegrating with poverty. The illness of the old grandfather, who has to be taken off to a home; the younger son who runs away, tempted into working for a black marketer; the abandonment of the house in which all the members of the family were born; the humiliation of unemployment—*La Terra Trema* is a dramatic poem on the subject of poverty, which it examines at once with pitiless detail and with a lyrical compassion. Amidst the decay and bleakness of their surroundings—the cracked walls and crumbling ceilings, and the lonely strips of beach—the characters are raised to a simple heroic plane. The women move with a fine consciousness of their physical grace, often formally grouped, the close-ups are statuesque, the long shots contemplative in their delay. (*La Terra Trema* established G. R. Aldo as one of the finest exterior cameramen in the world at present. His achievement is comparable to Tisse's in *Que Viva Mexico*.) The characters improvised much of their dialogue themselves, and their speech is usually slow and solemn.

Visconti's film originally ran for three hours or so; for commercial distribution it was cut down to under two, and the dialect of the original dialogue dubbed into Italian. The re-editing obscures a narrative already none too certain, and the quality of the soundtrack is incongruously smooth and metallic, though its intricacies—Visconti uses sound almost three-dimensionally, elaborately scaled in depth—can still be appreciated.

If in *La Terra Trema* Visconti had achieved the coherence that comes from a firm control over material, if he had shaped and condensed it instead of allowing it to fall almost indiscriminately into a series of episodes, the film would have been a masterpiece. It is still enormously impressive, but its indiscipline suggests a further parallel between Visconti and Renoir. Probably the greatest figure in the French cinema of the last twenty years, Renoir has yet made only one film, *La Règle du Jeu*, that can properly be called a masterpiece; the others are flawed, some seriously, some moderately, by a failure to establish a satisfactory relationship between artist and material. Visconti, one feels, will remain a leading figure in the Italian cinema whether or not his succeeding films are equally imperfect. "A Visconti film", an Italian director has remarked, "is always an event".

The case of Renato Castellani is different. He works on a smaller scale, he is technically in full command of his material, the narrative in his films is fast, lucid and compressed. In the '30's Castellani worked as assistant to Blasetti, and collaborated on the script of *Un' Avventura di Salvatore Rosa* and *La Corona di Ferro*; he also wrote the script of one of Camerini's comedies. For some time he subscribed to the Blasetti view of cinema—as a medium of pictorial ostentation—and the first film he directed, *Un Colpo di Pistola* (1941) was a sumptuous adaptation of a Pushkin story. Its skill was at once acknowledged, but Castellani did not find his real style, which was nearer to Camerini, for several years. *Mio Figlio Professore* (1946) points the way to it. This is a comedy about an old school porter, played by Aldo Fabrizi, who dotes on his only son: the son eventually becomes a professor at the college where the old man still works as porter. To avoid social embarrassment the father retires and goes away. Fabrizi makes the pathos and the renunciation rather too emphatic throughout, but Castellani holds the story together with incisive detachment. He extracts a good deal of humorous observation from the school surroundings, achieves a witty evocation of the 'twenties, and a sardonic comment on ministerial intrigues at the end of the war.

His next film, *Sotto il Sole di Roma*, is more completely characteristic. It deals with a group of adolescent youths running wild in Rome immediately before and after the end of the war. They are as fierce as American Dead End kids, though treated with much more insight and humour. The central character, a youth of about seventeen, is engaged in evading all family responsibilities, to the despair of his parents and his girl-friend. He willingly joins his friends' black market activities, he exploits a plump, middle-aged woman's foolish infatuation for him; from the fringe of crime he moves towards its centre, and his participation in a hold-up is prevented only at the last moment by his father, who is accidentally shot as a result. Ciro reacts to catharsis, and takes his place in the family again.

Most of *Sotto il Sole di Roma* is told in a series of swift, dynamic location scenes, managed with great skill and the kind of camera virtuosity completely absent in Rossellini. There is, for instance, a boxing match scene that for vividness in both shooting and editing is comparable to the American *Body and Soul*. The tone varies abruptly from the dramatic to the ruthlessly ironic; here, and in *E' Primavera*, it is

A sequence from "La Terra Trema".  
The fisherman's family wait for the return of his boat, out in a storm





Castellani's gift to take the outsider's view and emphasise almost simultaneously the tragic and comic sides of a situation. There is a brilliant sequence when Ciro's girl-friend pleads with him to relinquish his immoral acquaintances and honour his family: at first he is indifferent, then becomes amorous and kisses her, and then, when she takes this for assent, flies into a rage, slaps her face and walks away. The easy, instinctive cruelty of adolescence, which can be frightening or funny, is Castellani's speciality. It is present throughout the film—in the treatment of the young, pathetic vagabond picked up by the gang, who will do anything for his new companions and is heartlessly exploited, in the wonderfully comic and unkind scene of the ageing flapper being hoodwinked and discovering her humiliation in a lavatory afterwards, in numerous minor episodes. To bring off such a style demands ingenuity and balance, and Castellani sustains it with remarkable success until the last ten minutes. The father's tragic death is an incident that does not respond satisfactorily to this kind of handling.

Castellani's invention and high spirits are more completely matched in his last film, *E'Primavera*. This is the story of a charming but wholly amoral youth, Beppo, who courts and marries a simple peasant girl: he is drafted into the army, and on Christmas leave in Milan falls in with a shopkeeper's daughter. He marries this innocent and affectionate creature too. After the war he returns home, tells his first wife that he has become a commercial traveller and will have to spend much of his time in Milan. For some months he successfully keeps up two establishments in ignorance of each other. When his first wife discovers the situation, passion and humiliation cause her to try and stab him: the weapon goes into her own arm. At his trial for bigamy, Beppo states his case. Both the women, he explains, were so charming that he could not have refused marriage to either of them. He loved both, and both were happy until his first wife interfered. Now he is placed in the impossible position of having to choose one or the other.

This study of Beppo—an enlarged and more human study of the Ciro of *Sotto il Sole di Roma*—is a remarkable piece of characterisation. The sensuality, tenderness, cruel irresponsibility and ready charm of a young peasant temperament are beautifully drawn. It is almost equalled in the same film by the conception of Maria, his first wife, played by Elena Varzi, a girl of dark and heavy beauty. Since the situation is basically more humorous than that of *Sotto il Sole*—even though it switches, in the episodes of Maria's humiliation, to something quite different—*E'Primavera* keeps its balance right through. The climactic trial scene is uproarious, and Beppo's reconciliation with Maria afterwards charmingly managed. Passages of it are more tender than anything Castellani has previously achieved, and as a whole its pace, verve and sparkle show his talent at its height.

In both these films Castellani uses non-professional players with a skill as marked as any of his colleagues. Elena Varzi of *E'Primavera* has now become a professional actress: Francesco Golisano, the vagabond of *Sotto il Sole*, is the star of de Sica's latest film, *Miracolo a Milano*. In temperament Castellani is quite distinct from other Italian film-makers: his films are s lighter than Visconti's or de Sica's, more turbulent, there is a hedonistic streak in them which allows him to savour the excesses of life at their most charming and appalling, and he is in no way a moralist. His detachment prevents this, as it allows him to sharpen his observation of the idiosyncrasies of character and to jostle sex, grief, absurdity, death, pathos and horror in his films in a way most reminiscent, perhaps, of American writers like O'Hara or Dos Passos.

#### IV

The career of Roberto Rossellini is an example of arrested development. Since *Open City*, each film has tended to be a revelation of defects. How considerable is the talent to which these defects belong it is still unsafe to guess. What seems certain is that Rossellini is a minor figure, and not the major one for which some took him. The progress from *Open City* to the cul-de-sacs of *Stromboli* and *San Francesco* is at first sight very odd, but less so when one considers that as a film-maker Rossellini is really much less positive and confident than his first films made him seem to be. He is in fact distracted by the kind of uncertainty that brought David Lean (interestingly, one of his greatest admirers here) to a halt in his last two films.

Rossellini began as a documentarist, and continued as a scriptwriter, his most notable contribution to a prewar feature being to *Luciano Serra Pilota* (1938), a patriotic celebration of the Italian conquest of Abyssinia, written in collaboration with Mussolini's son Vittorio, then officially "director general" of the nationalised state cinema. Rossellini's war films (*La Nave Bianca*, *Un Pilota Ritorna*) followed a similar pattern; he and another director of inferior talent, Francesco de Robertis (whose best-known film is a submarine story, *Uomini sul Fondo*, and who scripted *La Nave Bianca*), were the leaders of the official realist school. Their position was in fact very different from that of de Sica or Visconti, who were working in more independent and less ambiguous directions. In the last days of the war, Rossellini began shooting *Open City* in the streets of Rome, and with great enterprise and persistence (money was lacking, the actors were mostly unknown, the cameras unreliable, much of the dialogue and action were improvised from day to day) completed a forceful and exciting film about Rome under German domination. *Open City* was roughly made, at times—mostly in the Gestapo scenes—over-emphatic, but it had intensity and dramatic observation, and it brought to life a wide cross-section of the city's inhabitants. Over-sensational in its Gestapo characterisations (ranging from the brutal rasping officer to the predatory lesbian with a pathetic actress in her toils), its picture of ordinary people, particularly the woman played by Magnani and the priest played by Fabrizi, was direct, telling and vigorous. In these passages, rather than in the violent ones, are to be found the most impressive qualities in all Rossellini's work.

They became, however, increasingly less evident. The form itself of *Paisa* heightened a feeling that *Open City* was the film of a highly talented journalist. Rossellini's technique of a cross-section immediacy had its limitations as well as its virtues. The six episodes of *Paisa* were uneven; all tended to culminate in an ironic-pathetic twist, and nearly all suggested half-realised possibilities. Watching the series of episodes, one could see how the dramatised newsreel style invariably gave a strong illusion of actuality—even when the material was no less doubtful than that of a number of studio-made war films—and that the kind of illusion it gave was more than usually persuasive because, in the usual sense, unfaked. There were no sets, no effects of style, no expert playing. But in *Germany Year Zero*, mixing studio and location techniques, Rossellini used a story in which a single central character was supposed to develop, and he failed to bring the character to life; the German boy remained a stiff, unrealised figure manoeuvred through a series of degradations. The studio scenes were somewhat inexpert, and though the episodes were supposed to convey a mounting squalor there was no equivalent psychological development in the handling of the child.





St. Francis (right) and brothers in Rossellini's "S. Francesco"

In *La Voce Umana* and *The Miracle* (a two-part film entitled *Amore* and dedicated to the art of Magnani) Rossellini used an extremity of the same form. *La Voce Umana*, with a smouldering display from Magnani, demonstrated that to film a one act, one set, one character play—a woman on the telephone to her lover—requires a severe discipline of style. One would have thought this obvious, yet it does not seem to have occurred to Rossellini, who set up his camera in front of the Magnani, let it shift to three or four different angles and track back or forward quite aimlessly. *The Miracle* was much better, but mostly on account of Magnani and Fellini's script. The mad peasant woman, seduced by a stranger whom she takes for St. Joseph, and believing herself later in the throes of an immaculate conception, was a powerful creation; but again she was undeveloped, and the film, made with unnecessary untidiness, lacked compassion and was kept too much on a note of degradation and horror.

Exchanging Bergman for Magnani, the pattern was repeated in *Stromboli*. Apparently without a proper script (but with half a dozen scriptwriters) Rossellini tried to elaborate a psychological drama, from the story of a D.P. who marries a fisherman to escape from her prison camp, but finds life on a volcanic Mediterranean island equally intolerable, in a series of improvised scenes. The climax—a pregnant woman climbing mountain slopes—was similar to *The Miracle*, with the horror of an erupting volcano added. Again, it was hardly surprising that this attempted exploration of character, made without due thought for characterisation, was aimless and bewildering. Nor can it be said that *San Francesco, Giulare di Dio* (St. Francis, Jester of God) is much of an improvement. Rossellini returns to the episodic form in his latest film, and the episodes (from "The Little Flowers") are oddly chosen. There is no attempt to present St. Francis in the round (the structure, one feels, is a primary evasion of this)—nothing about him, for instance, before he founded his brotherhood—and the last and longest sequence is not about St. Francis at all. It concerns the physical humiliation of Brother Ginepro at the hands of Ferruccio the Tyrant (alarmingly over-played by Fabrizi, the only professional actor in the film) and is treated with calm sadism.

In a previous issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, Simon Harcourt-Smith commented on the "bitter inverted puritanism" of Rossellini's attitude towards sex—the grovelling in *The Miracle* and *Stromboli*, and the insistence in both films on pregnancy pains; it seems likely that these are, rather, particular manifestations of a sensationalist element running through all Rossellini's work, from the torture sequences (partially cut in this country) of *Open City* to those of

*S. Francesco*. The latter's best scene, characteristically, is that of St. Francis embracing the leper, and this fails to come off properly because it is conceived as a piece of Eisenstein-style montage and Rossellini lacks the technique to sustain it.

This general lack of technique, shown in erratic continuity, slapdash photography and over-all lack of form, was praised at first by puritan critics who thought it a contributing factor rather than an inevitable outcome of the conditions under which the films were made. In fact, lack of narrative continuity and indifferent visual quality always impose a burden on the other elements of a film. The stylistic defects of *S. Francesco* are the same as those of *Paisa* (except that the photography of the new film is superior), but without strong material, and without dramatic intensity, they are revealed as serious flaws in Rossellini's whole talent. This talent is disorganised and determinedly brilliant: the choice of such widely different subjects as *Germany Year Zero*, *The Miracle*, *Stromboli* and *S. Francesco* (and, for that matter, the switch from *Un Pilota Ritorna* to *Open City*) points to both qualities. In the heat of actuality it could produce the vividness of *Open City* and parts of *Paisa*, but without this stimulus it exists on the kind of isolated and too often crude effects that have marked succeeding films. Rossellini seldom starts a film without a potentially exciting conception, and his gift for improvisation seems to prevent him from working it out: or, maybe, since *Open City* and *Paisa* he has under-estimated the material he has chosen and betrayed it each time to the attempt at a meretricious *tour de force*. He treats a mad peasant and a saint with the same quick objectivity, rather like a newspaper correspondent, renowned for his scoops, telegraphing his latest despatch. His most successful script collaborations have been with Sergio Amidei on *Open City* and *Paisa*, and it is no doubt in part due to Amidei that these films have a certain depth. For the rest, Rossellini has become the dilettante of the Italian cinema.

## V

Of the several less established Italian directors, the two most promising are, I think, Luciano Emmer and Michelangelo Antonioni. Each has made only one feature film (Emmer is now at work on a second), after some years of working in documentary. Emmer's dramatised impressions of medieval and Renaissance painting, made in collaboration with Enrico Gras, and his two romantic films on Venice, are indeed well known. The output of short films in Italy since the war has been plentiful but rather stereotyped; the tasteful travelogue, specialising in nicely framed landscapes, distinguished ruins and a slightly florid commentary, represents a monotonous average. Emmer's short films are in their way as individual as those of Sucksdorff: the best of the painting ones—Bosch's *Paradiso Perduto*, Botticelli's *Allegoria di Primavera*, Goya's *Desastri della Guerra*—have a real experimental quality, constructing a narrative or evoking a painter's world by clever selection of detail, creating an illusion of movement by sharp cutting and dramatic camerawork. The Venice films, pictorially magnificent, are rich in atmosphere and have a lyrical intensity. It appears that Emmer has now rejected the "slightly decadent" approach of these films; at any rate, his *Domenica d'Agosto* is in the contemporary location tradition.

Centred on a pleasure beach near Rome, contrasting and intermingling the lives of people from different layers of society who spend a Sunday afternoon there, this is a light, episodic and entertaining film. The observation varies in quality—at its best in the scenes of the boisterous lower-class family, the elegant rich, and the youth and girl who meet by





Films by Renato Castellani. Top left: the Nava sisters as the headmaster's daughters in "Mio Figlio Professore". Left and right: scenes from "Sotto il Sole di Roma". Below, right: Beppe and his (first) wife in "E'Primavera"







Top: Massimo Girotti and Lucia Bose in "Cronaca di un Amore".  
Centre: "Senza Pieta". Below: Lucia Bose and Raf Vallone in de Santis' latest, "Non c'e' pace tra gli ulivi"

chance, at its weakest in the more conventional figures of the petty thieves—and Emmer has crammed in too much material; but it has great charm and skill, it is beautifully shot and freshly acted, by a cast mainly unknown.

Antonioni's documentaries include an original and dramatic survey of the sewers of Rome, in which he extracts humour and some striking visual impressions from this rather formidable subject. His first feature, *Cronaca di un Amore*, is a chilly, incisive account of a frustrating love affair, between the neurotic, spoilt, beautiful wife of a middle-aged Milanese business man, and a poor young man she has known before as a student. The plot is rather melodramatic, with echoes of *Double Indemnity* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. The obsessive physical attraction of each for the other is satisfied furtively in shabby rooms and in cars in the early hours of the morning, to escape the jealous husband's detectives: the two of them plan with increasing vehemence to do away with the husband, as years ago they had planned to murder Guido's fiancée. A coincidence repeats itself; the fiancée had accidentally died, and now Paola's husband is killed in a car crash. The lovers' relationship does not survive this double feeling of guilt, and Guido leaves his mistress at the moment they are really free. *Cronaca di un Amore* is shot against the grimy, rainy, melancholy background of Milan, and Antonioni's skill with his locations, heightened by an ingenious score written for piano and saxophone only, with dissonant variations on "The Man I Love", creates a potent and extremely depressing atmosphere. With his human beings he is less completely successful. The style is deliberately exact and objective, scrutinising the characters in long takes, implying rather than conveying passion; the nervy, always impeccably fashionable girl and her shabby lover, played by Lucia Bose and Massimo Girotti, are a potentially interesting pair, but there is not enough analysis or strength in the writing to justify Antonioni's severe, dispassionate treatment. Failure though it is, *Cronaca di un Amore* has a technical discipline and descriptive power that establishes Antonioni as a film maker of considerable promise.

More established are Alberto Lattuada and Giuseppe de Santis, both like Antonioni graduates of the Centro Sperimentale, and their technical proficiency suggests the excellence of one side of the school's training. Lattuada's films, which seem to alternate regularly between contemporary and costume subjects, are mounted with care and taste and have a sometimes elaborate visual style. His costume pieces—*Il Delitto di Giovanni Episcopo*, and the more recent *Il Mulino del Po*, a diffuse work which combines a tragic love story with an account of the beginnings of socialism among the peasants of Ferrara—are clearly the result of serious craftsmanship, but they lack vitality. The contemporary *Senza Pieta*, about the friendship of a white girl and a negro G.I. in the squalor of postwar Leghorn, is hardly more alive. It abounds in carefully conceived surface detail, shows American influence in the melodramatic sequences, and is passionless throughout. So far Lattuada has not progressed beyond a correct and obviously intelligent technique unallied to human or dramatic qualities.

With de Santis, by contrast, technique has run wild. His *Caccia Tragica* and *Riso Amaro*, the second particularly, are ostentatious virtuoso melodramas and almost classic examples of the really pretentious commercial film. Where Lattuada is conscientious but bloodless, de Santis openly exploits every device of cinema with which he is acquainted—he can handle enormous crowd scenes, like the attack on the train in *Caccia Tragica* and the panoramas of the rice-fields in *Riso Amaro*, on the Russian scale: he can drench a scene in eroticism and



brutality on combined French and American models: he can manoeuvre a shooting-cum-kissing match in an *abattoir* or on the back of a trailer moving at fifty miles an hour, as outrageously as Welles sets his lovers in an aquarium or a hall of mirrors in *The Lady from Shanghai*. The plastic qualities of his films are sometimes remarkable, whether they arise from his own dexterity in montage and sweeping compositions, or from the sinuous movements of Silvana Mangano. De Santis is probably the most accomplished and meretricious technician in films today. With him the cycle of "neo-realism" is complete from the over-raw Rossellini films to his own over-cooked surface authenticity, for which the locations provide no more than a tasty dressing.

The hand of de Santis can also be seen in a film more interesting than those he has personally directed, *Il Sole Sorge Ancora* (*The Sun will Rise Again*), a melodramatic and sometimes crude account of an Italian village under German occupation in the last months of the war. Financed in 1946 by the partisan association and more overtly communist than de Santis' own later films, the story is angled from the point of view of opposing classes—the decadent upper-class layer that collaborates, the peasants who resist, the tension and bitterness between them. It was directed by Aldo Vergano with the assistance of de Santis in the script and the shooting itself, and is remarkable for two or three sequences, notably the assassination of a group of hostages, and for its characterisation of the rich, corrupt family. Vergano does not appear to have made anything else of equivalent interest.

## VI

The last thirty years of the cinema, Charles Ford pointed out in an article in *SIGHT AND SOUND* a few months ago, have seen many different styles of conscious realism. In the 20's Louis Delluc was advising film-makers to look for their material in the streets, and since that time realism has been explored in many forms, from the straightforward actualities of location filming to various degrees of formal and naturalistic representations in the studio. These developments of style are due both to the discoveries of individual film-makers and to the technical progress of the cinema. If one sees again today an American sociological melodrama of the 30's such as *You Only Live Once*, its obvious studio manufacture strikes one as anachronistic—but Lang's film was considered markedly realist at the time, and seeing it in 1938 one would no doubt have thought it so. Today, skilled directors are aware of the limits of studio realism, and in films like *The Set-Up* or *Pinky* adapt themselves to a realistic *convention*—with the "semi-documentary" style nearly as popular in America as in Italy,

it would be unwise to imitate realism literally in the studio. Similarly, it would have been impossible for Rossellini, making *Open City* with such limited resources, to have given the film a professional finish associated with the studio product; he cleverly turned disadvantage to advantage, and emphasised the vividness of raw actuality. The myth of the Italian "neo-realist school" arose perhaps because *Open City* was made at a time when actuality was out of fashion. All that the term "neo-realist" can be held to imply is that the leading Italian directors prefer to remain outside the studio most of the time. Their individual styles vary as much of those of the best contemporary American or famous Russian directors. As the Soviet cinema encompassed Dovzhenko at one end of the scale and the Vassiliev brothers at the other, so the Italian cinema includes both Visconti and de Sica. The styles of these two film-makers cannot be said to have evolved completely, either, when de Sica's new film contains fantasy (he will make "the unreal seem real", he has said) and when Visconti is contemplating a costume romance; and Rossellini, after all, has moved from the conquest of Abyssinia through the Liberation to St. Francis of Assisi.

De Sica, Visconti and Castellani have moved progressively towards either writing their own scripts or working in close collaboration with a writer, and this is probably why their work has been more certain and consistent than many of their contemporaries. The tendency towards shapelessness and excess of dialogue in many Italian films may be due in part, one feels, to the large number of scenarists employed on them: maybe six are necessary for all the concoctions of a *Riso Amaro*, but one or two less would probably have reduced, say, *Domenica d'Agosto* to more unified proportions.

There is in the contemporary Italian cinema all the diversity, and some of the excesses, that one would expect to find in a true renaissance. The more examples one sees, the more one realises this: one has to go back to the roots to retrace the directions in which it has grown (and to find that some of the branches that have reached this country are relatively low down the tree): and there seems to be an urgent need for more of these films to be shown publicly in Britain. It is always difficult to forecast how well films will do outside their own country, but *E' Primavera*, *Cronaca di un Amore*, *Gli Uomini che Mascalzoni* and *I Bambini ci Guardano* have chances as certain as many. The latter two, by the way, were shown by the London Film Club in a double bill, and make—with de Sica acting in the first and directing in the second—an admirable programme, a telescoped history of an outstanding development in the modern Italian cinema.





De Mille's "Cleopatra". "Somewhere a pocket with an improper postcard hidden in it"

## THE SIEGFRIED OF SEX

*Thoughts Inspired by Cecil B. de Mille's "Samson and Delilah"*

Simon Harcourt-Smith

I AM ONE OF THOSE unfortunate people whom the film obsesses but all too rarely pleases. *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, *Orphée*, *On the Town*, *Berliner Ballade*, and perhaps *La Beauté du Diable* with *All About Eve* as runners up: here, I think, is all that the last 52 weeks have given me.

Can I be blamed, therefore, if some of my obsession must be diverted to an appreciation of the year's worst films—the finer shades of inanity, bad taste which becomes heroic? I was recently discussing the question with an eminent critic. We were in full agreement that *Black Magic*, with Orson Welles as Cagliostro, must rank as the most preposterous of the last year's films—provoking its audiences to a ritualistic sort of laughter that recalled *Young England* at the Victoria Palace just before the war. We paused to consider what film should take second place. *Samson and Delilah*, my friend suggested. But almost as soon, he recalled his words. The latest de Mille is far from qualifying for our catalogue of ineptitude.

Let us, however, first of all define the word "ineptitude" in this context. By it, I here mean a film which despite the advantage of expensive "stars", an apparently adolescent code of ethics, and roaring bad taste, fails as popular entertainment. Of this category *Cæsar and Cleopatra* is perhaps the supremely disastrous example, and *Black Magic* but a shabby one. The directors, Mr. Gabriel Pascal and Mr. Gregory

Ratoff respectively, here failed even in the humblest of their prescribed tasks.

This could never be said of Cecil B. de Mille. Inane stories, inaner dialogue, decrepit clichés unite, in almost all his pictures—certainly in all of the last twenty years—with a roadhouse taste that puts Arliss's *Wicked Lady* or Blasetti's *Fabiola* to shame. One is goaded, irritated, sometimes even shocked by his pictures. Yet, grudgingly, when one sees *Samson and Delilah*, as when one saw *The Sign of the Cross* nearly a generation ago, one recognises a mastery—repellent, monstrous, blatant perhaps, but a mastery, not to be denied. Here is no fumbling, no ineptitude. We may not like what Cecil B. de Mille sets out to achieve; but we must grant that he achieves it with absolute precision. The arc through which the bare midriff wriggles, the parabola of the sadistic lash, are evidently calculated to a nicety, as a great chef might weigh the condiments for one of his sauces. We are hardly surprised then to hear that *Samson and Delilah* is packing the cinemas of Lisbon, Antwerp, Calcutta and Hong Kong.

Cecil B. de Mille has been in pictures for nearly two generations. With Jesse Lasky he was one of the founding fathers of Hollywood. In what was then no more than a shabby suburb of Los Angeles, they hired a barn in 1912, and there made *The Squaw Man*, which de Mille was to remake with



sound in 1931. Soon afterwards, they formed with Adolph Zukor a combination of independent producers under the name of Paramount.

De Mille's film career stretches back therefore to the age of Melies and of D. W. Griffith. Indeed with his *The Cheat* in 1915, his fame as an "advanced" director for a time rivalled that of Griffith. Here was a story no less absurd than any which he was to use subsequently. A husband has stolen 100,000 dollars; his wife (Fanny Ward) to save him from dishonour, offers to "give herself" to a Japanese acquaintance (that admirable and forgotten actor, Sessue Hayawaka) against a similar sum. Then, she obtains the 100,000 dollars elsewhere, and refuses to fulfil her bargain. The Japanese, not unnaturally nettled, brands her on the shoulder. I cannot remember clearly how the action proceeded from there, though I recall with painful clarity the carbolic smell of the Corn Exchange whither my father dragged me across dark, wet fields in the last year of the first war to see this masterpiece. For masterpiece it certainly was, in its way. Here for the first time was displayed a restraint in direction and acting which was to give the cinema a completely new style, an ideal of sophistication which it has never renounced. The husband, I vaguely remember, objected somewhat to his wife's branding, and was had up for attempting to kill the Japanese. He was saved by her baring her disfigured shoulder in court. Sessue Hayawaka under de Mille's direction here sublimated a style of impassivity which Mousjoukine and Garbo were to use with immense effect in tragic screen acting ten to fifteen years later, and which may well have influenced the inspired clowning of Buster Keaton.

But de Mille's historic contribution to the development of the film was his evolution of a rich dream world reserved for millionaires and their glittering molls. Those vast off-white apartments with their Lalique menageries, those flirtations at Palm Beach or Monte Carlo which one day Kay Francis or Carole Lombard would so precisely and charmingly conduct, can trace their origin directly back to such films of de Mille's, made between 1916-1922, as *Forbidden Fruit*, *Why Change Your Wife*, or *Male and Female*. Before anyone else, perhaps, de Mille realised the possibilities latent in the portraying of upper-class sexiness. Ernest Bramah's Chinese story-teller, K'ai Lung, it will be recalled, laid it down as a principle of his craft to regale low-born audiences with tales of "the high-minded depravity of the rich". De Mille may fairly be described as the first K'ai Lung of the screen. He taught the tired, harassed workman to dream that he was the care-free playboy who had only to ring for a valet or a treacherously loving beauty; and he taught the workman's wife to forget her rough hands and aching back in the fantasy of herself becoming that treacherous beauty. But he had learned from Griffith the importance of adding a pinch of puritan morality to his dishes. The climate of adultery was never allowed to penetrate into the last reel.

Yet, in less cunning hands than his, de Mille's new invention of "sex appeal" was getting out of control. That great American bogey, the women's clubs, began to mutter; there occurred the scandalous death which landed "Fatty" Arbuckle in prison. Will H. Hays, who had been President Harding's postmaster-general, was sent to purge Hollywood of vice, and to inspire the code of morality which has kept the American film, and the British one for that matter, in an unseemly state of adolescence ever since.

No mere Hays Code however was likely to hamper so ingenious a spirit as de Mille's. He turned to a new form of film—the vast spectacle, first evolved perhaps in the Italian

*Quo Vadis* (1912) and developed of course in America by Griffith. *The Ten Commandments* (1923) did not however possess one tenth of *Intolerance's* invention, while it surpassed it in shoddiness of art direction. In fact, this film with *King of Kings* (1927) and *The Sign of the Cross* (1932) set the pattern for the coarsened and preposterous parody of Griffith's work which has become a tradition almost inviolate whenever Hollywood makes a costume "spectacle". For me this type of picture is epitomised by the memory of some head which one inevitably associates with a bankers' luncheon in, say, Toledo, Ohio, but now sees miserably under papier-maché helmet or cotton-wool wig; while from the all-American lips comes such a phrase as:— "I'll have him hospitalized at Antioch, m'darrm", or "Yew can't doo thut to a Roman Centurion". Henry Wilcoxon, that veteran of the silent days, possesses perhaps the perfect example of this head. It gave me immeasurable pleasure to see him pop up again as the villain in *Samson and Delilah*.

"Beachcomber" long ago invented a monstrous film tycoon called "Sol Hogwasch", a specialist in "mighty spectacles" who is always yearning to slip a chariot race into his current "mammoth" production of "Wuthering Heights". Hogwasch, one feels, has reached his capacity for misusing power only through chance and a certain animal cunning; he knows nothing of life and still less of the cinema. But the case of de Mille—though his films may have Hogwasch elements—is obviously different, for he knows what he is about.

He has, one feels, never forgotten his invention of "sex appeal". He knows that the entertainment business is in the main a by-product of the sexual impulse. Everyone, his films seem to imply, has somewhere a pocket with an improper



"Sign of the Cross". "All the fun, all the luxury was monopolized by the wicked Poppaea (Claudette Colbert) . . ."





"Samson and Delilah". Left, Samson (Victor Mature) and dwarfs. Right, Hedy Lamarr as Delilah: "... de Mille has allowed the strings of sex to sag"

postcard hidden in it, a boot-cupboard that conceals the erotic novel. For those whose blood has chilled or not yet warmed, he provides in addition the elements of size and terror—a burning Rome, the relief of a British fort in eighteenth century America by a column of dead Redcoats, the torturing of Samson by dwarfs, his upsetting of Dagon's huge statue on top of the Philistines.

*The Sign of the Cross*—which incidentally was reissued towards the end of the war with a curious prologue involving an American bomber over Rome and three army chaplains of different denominations in it—was a perfect example of de Mille's technique. All the fun, all the luxury, was monopolised by the wicked Poppaea (Claudette Colbert) in her bath of asses' milk; while at the end, poor Elissa Landi, in a gown that not even an early Christian girl would have been seen dead in, goes out into the Alma-Tadema arena to face the lions with only Fredric March for support. No doubt by the standard of the Hays Office this signified the ultimate triumph of Virtue. But de Mille has given Vice a good run for its money, first.

The success of *The Seventh Veil* and of James Mason may well have caused de Mille to widen the range of his entertainment. There had occurred many a hint of torture in his earlier epics: we recall for instance the incident of the Christian boy in *The Sign of the Cross* who is made to blab. But in his last two creations, *Unconquered* (1947) and now *Samson and Delilah*, de Mille exploits the rising taste for sadism of our dying society. In *Unconquered* occurred moments of surprising beauty—Indians and Redcoats intermingled in compositions that must, you would have thought, have drawn their inspiration from Benjamin West's "Death of General Wolfe". But we remember them far less than the humiliations inflicted upon Paulette Goddard, or the horror of the sacked and scalped village, which so easily might be our own today. Here we seemed to see an analogy to the modern predicament, save that we cannot be too certain this time of the Paleface's ultimate victory.

*Samson and Delilah* strives once again after analogy. Reminiscent of *Intolerance's* rocking cradle is the rotating globe at the beginning, even if the only recognisable land-mass on it be the U.S.A.; and de Mille would have us look upon Samson as a sort of liberal rebel, a Resistance leader fighting a Philistine Gestapo. There is perhaps a case for this thesis—but only until the first sight of Victor Mature. About his appearance, about all the fables of his Hollywood antics,

lingers such an element of farce, that with his entry vanish the last pretensions of the picture to be taken gravely. Here, one is tempted to think at first, is de Mille guying himself; nor is that impression diminished by the tango theme which is apparently the Liebestodmotif of the picture, still less by the blonde plaits of Angela Lansbury.

Equally absurd is Samson's fight with the lion; the variations between Mature and his double, between live lion and stuffed one, are all too visible; one wonders whether de Mille is not now so confident of his magic that he no longer bothers over details of this sort.

More serious perhaps is the slackness with which de Mille has allowed the strings of sex to sag. Hedy Lamarr may be a resplendant, tantalising Delilah; to the scene of Samson's seduction she lends an incongruous Central European style of flirtation. Yet I suspect that *Samson and Delilah* will not make its money from its sexual appeal.

De Mille has inexplicably neglected one of the most haunting episodes in the Biblical account of Samson's career. In Judges 16.6 Delilah shows her hand forthright, revealing herself as a police spy, asking with scant ceremony "wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee". Naturally on his guard, Samson fools her with a recipe of seven green withs. She binds him as proscribed; then her conscience gets the better of her and she warns: "The Philistines be upon you, Samson". Naturally the whole plot ends in a fiasco.

The same thing happens the second time she asks him. He recommends new ropes, which prove no more effective than the withs. It is at her third nagging that he reveals the secret of his hair.

Now, here surely is a situation of great tragic intensity. Samson knows that Delilah is plotting his doom, yet he cannot keep away from her. It is to me puzzling why de Mille, cunning showman that he is, chose to throw away this situation, as he threw away Samson's theft of the great gates of Gaza.

Equally, de Mille has made little attempt to approximate Mature's portrait to the splendid Biblical description of the hero; the sarcasm he pours upon his Timnite father-in-law; the episode of burning the Philistine crops with brands tied to 300 foxes; Samson's lordly fashion of stopping the entire action of the drama while he goes "in unto" a harlot he had seen by chance in the streets of Gaza. Mature's Samson, though far from repulsive, is the classic half-back; his length

(continued on page 424)



# Films of the Month



"The Breaking Point". Patricia Neal, John Garfield, Juano Hernandez

## THE BREAKING POINT

WARNERS, WHO HOLD THE screen rights of Ernest Hemingway's "To Have and Have Not", have certainly got value for their money. The book was first filmed, in 1944, with a script credit to William Faulkner; the title was retained, but the story was transmuted into a wartime crisis of awakening patriotism. In *Key Largo*, a denouement borrowed from the novel was attached rather arbitrarily to Maxwell Anderson's play. Now *The Breaking Point*, scripted by Randal MacDougall, makes a determined effort to come within striking distance of Hemingway's original theme.

The hero of the novel—not one of the writer's best—is Harry Morgan, a broken-down Florida boat owner, doing his best to make an honest living, finding it impossible and venturing beyond the law. The theme is his struggle to support his family and maintain his self-respect, when he can do the one only at the cost of losing the other. *The Breaking Point*, with the setting transferred to California, retains the story's essentials. Morgan, cheated by a tourist, yields to a shyster lawyer's suggestion that he smuggle Chinese into the U.S.A. aboard his boat; tricked again, he loses the boat to the customs officers. The lawyer recovers it, on condition that Morgan uses it to aid the escape of a gang of race-track crooks. Morgan conceives the desperate plan of taking out the boat and, single-handed, overpowering the gang (the *Key Largo* situation). He succeeds, achieving expiation at the cost of an amputated arm.

Thanks largely to an impressive performance by John Garfield as the embittered, determined hero at the end of his

tether; to a convincing picture of the tensions of his home life (slightly marred by a sickly performance from Phyllis Thaxter); and to Ted McCord's photography, with its sense of the hot little port and the clear sea, the film in its early stages conveys a good deal of the book's atmosphere. But, from the end of the Chinese episode and Morgan's loss of his boat, the film sinks gradually beneath the burden of all too familiar characters—Patricia Neal's blonde with a conventional line in wisecracks, Wallace Ford's overplayed lawyer—and situations. The final scenes in the boat, particularly, can add nothing new.

The script, after outlining a situation whose main spring is a moral crisis, abandons its exploration, and the story is played out on a level of melodramatic excitement. Weakness in the writing is particularly apparent in Morgan's last scene with his wife, when the dialogue sounds almost like a parody of some of Hemingway's less happy mannerisms. With material so overworked, Michael Curtiz' slick, rather mechanical, style is inadequate. He achieves one or two effective moments of tension, but yields too often to his taste for a formalized arty shot. A case in point is the last shot of the film: a Negro, Morgan's friend and only crew member, has been killed by the gang; at the end, his small son stands alone, in the dark, on the solitary dock. This could have been a moving conclusion, but it is so manoeuvred into position, has so little connection with what has gone before, that it becomes merely a director's flourish. This clever artifice without emotional justification is typical of the level at which the director has approached his subject; only Garfield's playing consistently suggests greater depths and resources.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.



# LA VIE COMMENCE DEMAIN

IN *Paris 1900* (inexplicably not yet shown in this country) Nicole Védres reconstructed a fragment of the past with skill and charm; in *La Vie Commence Demain* she attempts a construction of the future, through the eyes of Sartre, Le Corbusier, Jean Rostand, Gide and others. A young man from the provinces, pleasantly portrayed by Jean-Pierre Aumont, is given a lift to Paris in a helicopter by André Labarthe, the popular science journalist. Labarthe reproaches him for wanting to see only museums and ancient buildings, and suggests he takes an interest in the present and the future; he recommends visits to various celebrities instead. Thus, on a note of expectation and promise, nicely tinged with fantasy, *La Vie Commence Demain* proceeds.

Inevitably the scenes that follow are of varying quality, and for the structure of the film it is a pity that the best ones come first—Sartre's characteristic exposition of the individual's inescapable collective guilt for the disasters of society, Rostand's fascinating glimpses of the potentialities of science and medicine, Le Corbusier's description of his enormous new building of modern flats on the outskirts of Marseilles. The first two of these are illustrated with material from newsreels and other documents, aptly pieced together. Gide, however, has nothing to offer beyond a calculated display of malice, Picasso and Prévert hide their faces behind samples of the former's pottery: and the materialists go unchallenged. The interest of such a film is twofold: first, the personal one of seeing a number of distinguished people on the screen—and in these impressions of character, some of which have humour and penetration, *La Vie Commence Demain* is most completely successful: secondly, there is the question of what the people actually say. One cannot expect more than a random series of observations, as opposed to any consistent vision of the future emerging, and the future cannot be evoked, after all, only through the eyes of distinguished men of letters, artists and scientists. From this point of view, the film is best when the celebrities confine themselves to their own fields—Rostand's scientific speculations and Le Corbusier's survey of his own achievements—and worst when Labarthe takes over.

The final sequences, in which Labarthe, who does not himself appear capable of anything more than oracular platitudes, takes the young man to a U.N.O. meeting, do not add anything substantial. *La Vie Commence Demain* is an unequal mixture of compilation and actuality, of fact and hypothesis; it establishes Nicole Védres as an individual figure in the cinema, but the film has not the balance of its predecessor. The past, sensitively re-created through documentation, has a life and completeness of its own in *Paris 1900*: here, the future appears as little more than a projection of the peaceful and aggressive uses of science. In spite of the impressive parade, we come out where we came in—in the present.

GAVIN LAMBERT.

## HA'PENNY BREEZE

NOW ON GENERAL RELEASE (by A.B. Pathé, supporting *The Elusive Pimpernel*), *Ha'penny Breeze* is a modest independent venture by three enthusiasts, Frank Worth, who co-scripted and directed, Don Sharp, his script colleague and leading



Carette in Renoir's brilliant "*La Règle du Jeu*", now given its first London run

actor, and Darcy Conyers, producer and supporting player. The film was shot entirely on location in the village of Pin Mill, Suffolk, and has a simple story built round a young boatman who comes home after the war with an Australian friend; they find the village derelict and apathetic, but together bring new life to it by making it into a yachting centre. The cast is mainly unknown, and like the technicians worked for a salary of £10 a week: the total budget was less than £20,000, and the filming was planned on an alternate interior-exterior schedule to allow for difficulties of weather.

*Ha'penny Breeze* has both the freshness and the awkwardness one might expect from such a venture. Its locations are attractively shot, their treatment shows an affection for place and character, and a sincerity of feeling informs even the most uncomfortably written episodes. The pity is that the script, with a slight, conventional but acceptable plot, contains so much poor, amateurish dialogue, especially in its comic relief. The descriptive and light romantic passages are agreeably managed by the director, and there is a charming performance from Gwyneth Vaughan: it may seem odd, while saluting the enterprise and promise of the film, to reproach it for being too unambitious, but the pitfall of modesty is subservience to convention. Crude caricature in place of comedy is a recurrent vice of British films, and reflects their fairly general weakness in characterisation below the surface; *Ha'penny Breeze*, despite its independence of spirit, cannot be acquitted here. It would be a pity if the definite talent shown by Frank Worth—both in the narrative of certain sequences and in the way he has risen to the adaptability demanded by lack of resources—does not develop itself, now that it has gained the attention of at least one British producer, on stronger material.

GAVIN LAMBERT.



# EDITING

## Karel Reisz

IT IS A CURIOUS FACT of film history that Eisenstein, who is so often mentioned as one of the most influential figures in the development of film technique, has had so small a lasting influence on the practice of film-making. His thesis that a true cinematic method depends largely on the stimuli produced by the juxtaposition of contrasting shots (as well as his consequent rejection of "smooth" cutting) is almost without exception rejected by contemporary directors. In the case of story-films, the reasons for this attitude are not difficult to find. The contemporary director who is concerned with fast, *dramatically* interesting continuities, regards Eisenstein's constant cutting between physically unrelated images as an irrelevant conceit. Eisenstein's methods are, in any case, not suitable to the portrayal of characters: his films express ideas and the reactions of groups of people to these ideas; they only very rarely touch on personal dramatic conflicts. Where the contemporary story-film director attempts to reach his audience through the interplay of the characters, Eisenstein's aim was to affect the spectator more directly: his way was to evolve more intellectually appealing continuities and let the spectator receive the ideas, as it were, straight from the director. When, for instance, he sets out in *October* to throw scorn on orthodox religion, he does it by assembling a sequence of composed tilted and inverted shots of church spires and numerous, physically unconnected religious objects: not, it will be noted, through showing the effect of religious ceremonies on a particular individual. The whole narrative frame-work of *October*, is, indeed, extremely vague, for although he does have a story to tell, Eisenstein is more interested in drawing intellectual conclusions from it than in telling it in an exciting way. The figure of Kerensky is not so much a character as an abstract symposium of everything that was, to Eisenstein, odious about a bourgeois upstart. His whole conception of film-making is, in fact, diametrically opposed in aim to contemporary story-telling methods which are concerned with the exposition of character through continuous narrative. Hence, in practice, no director to-day would dream of using Eisenstein's device of overlapping continuous shots such as he has in the opening of the palace doors sequence in *October* or the more famous passage of the raising of the bridges in the same film. The emphasis to-day is on the very opposite effect, namely on smoothly matching movements.

More surprising perhaps than the rejection of "relational editing" by fiction-film makers is the fact that the Eisenstein influence seems to have almost entirely come to an end in the field of documentary. Where, in the 'thirties, Basil Wright in *Song of Ceylon* and Willard Van Dyke in *The City* evolved visual continuities which were in themselves expressive, present-day directors, on the whole, seem to favour less difficult methods. Where the theme of *Song of Ceylon*—the essential invulnerability of the Eastern mind to Western ideas, seen in the context of the West's immense practical influence on Ceylon—gave Basil Wright scope to compose a highly personal essay, the majority of present-day documentaries are pamphlets pure and simple. They do not merely deal in facts and ideas, they have to try to sell them. Since the easiest—though not necessarily the best—way of selling an idea is to make a speech, and since pamphleteering,

as everyone knows, depends on reiteration, to-day's documentaries make the commentary carry the message and let the picture illustrate the words. The same thing is said twice over to make sure. The films become little more than illustrated lectures which, when skilfully done, are often effective. But the kind of expressive visual continuity used by Eisenstein plays no part in them.

The only consistent exceptions to this trend in the documentary world have been the films of Humphrey Jennings. Jennings succeeded uniquely in his films in combining the personal values of the artist with the clear exposition of ideas. He was able, as well as any one, to construct a sequence purely by "editing": one remembers him, in *Diary for Timothy*, inter-cutting shots of Gielgud's war-time performance of Hamlet with a sequence in a canteen where wardens are comparing bomb stories. Yet, in most cases, where he wanted to conduct an argument, he guided the spectator with a commentary. *Diary for Timothy* states its "argument" in the commentary but the visuals give it more than mere illustrations. The commentary and visuals, through a subtly contrived and timed interweaving pattern, alternately comment on each other: neither is the primary source of appeal and there is no repetition of statement.

At a recent re-viewing of Jennings' last film *Family Portrait* one heard comments to the effect that the total effect of a fine film was marred by the fact that all its substance lay in the commentator's words. Here, if ever there was one, is a film of ideas, subtly and excitingly expressed. Here, one might at first have thought, was an ideal theme to be expressed in pictures alone, for it is a film of personal feelings and speculations of which there was no need to convince anyone. Yet admitting that the visual qualities of *Family Portrait* are as fine as any that have been seen in a documentary film made in this country, we are still left with the fact that the extremely intricate argument is stated in the first place in the commentator's words.

*Family Portrait* is a challenge to the Eisenstein devotee. Jennings seems to have recognised that the proper medium for the expression of ideas is through words and that the function of the visuals in a film essay of this kind was to strengthen and to illuminate obliquely rather than to express directly the intellectual contents of the film. This may appear a misguided conclusion to the film purist. He may come back with any number of examples from *October* or *The General Line* where Eisenstein contrived to convey ideas through visuals alone. The ridiculing of religious ceremonies which Eisenstein has in *October* is a case in point. But one may, I think, legitimately retort by asking how far Eisenstein's sequence goes. His long, extremely repetitious passage makes a comparatively small point, and it may at least be questioned, whether its effect is, in practice, the desired one. A shot of a church spire, shown upside down, may, to someone who is already of Eisenstein's opinion, symbolise the foolishness of religious ceremonies. To someone who isn't, it may do nothing of the sort, it may simply remain—a church spire shown upside down.

It may be—at least, until someone makes a film to prove the contrary—that a more complex intellectual argument cannot be expressed through "relational editing" alone; that, in fact, Jennings' approach is the one ideally suited to the expression of the intellectual film essay. It may be, that the method of "relational editing", hitherto held to be a universally applicable method for the purveyance of ideas in the film medium, is an unnecessary complication which the sound cinema has outgrown.



Dear Editor,—Among my Christmas mail was a card from you asking me to do another article, preferably on “musicals”. As Sid Field might have said, “What an assignment!” I remember that when you first came to see me about writing for *SIGHT AND SOUND*, I explained to you that I was not by nature cut out to be a critic—I enjoy things far too much. Unless a film is a real shocker, I am quite unable to assume that facade of glacial detachment which is so essential a part of the critic’s make-up; I would a hundred times rather praise one reel than condemn the other ten. But in spite of this instinctive desire to regard the cinema purely as an enjoyable relaxation, I am able to keep a small section of my brain ticking over, analysing, appreciating this bit of technique, deprecating that. You may wonder what this has to do with my present task? It is leading up to a confession that will cause consternation in the Critics’ Circle; the undeniable truth is that providing certain ladies whom I shall name to you later are on the screen before me, my critical faculties (normally, no doubt, quiescent by your standards anyway), are completely submerged. In other and simpler words, I am a sucker for musicals. I have known the still small voice of reason to be heard at moments when the story is being pushed along by any of the subsidiary characters, but if Vera-Ellen, Rita Hayworth, Jeanne Crain, Yvonne de Carlo or Ginger Rogers are around, my brain is no more critical than if I had suffered a complete pre-frontal leucotomy. Fortunately for my career, these delectable ladies do not occupy the screen the whole time, nor are they in every musical. If they were, I am afraid I might never be extricated from a seat rather near the front.

One of the films I saw over Christmas was *The Toast of New Orleans*. You will see that none of the select group of ladies above is involved in this little number, so I was able to keep a fairly level head. Anyway, this film is not just a musical, being also a film about musicians; these are always good for a laugh or two. (Perhaps you will explain to me one day why it is that film companies spend thousands of dollars a year checking up on the absolute authenticity of material details, but are incapable of shooting a hundred feet of a film about music without making some crashing blunder.) One of the funniest films I ever saw was *Concerto* which was made in deadly earnest, and which employed Rubinstein to dub the sound-track for, yes, *eighty thousand* dollars. I cannot believe that he ever saw it until after it was made, as any competent hack could have prevented most of the more hilarious *faux pas*.

*The Toast of New Orleans* is about an opera company whose star is Kathryn Grayson, and their employment and training of a rather uncouth fisher boy acted to the life by Mario Lanza. The operatic coach is played by a *real* composer, Richard Hagemann, who nevertheless, was unable to prevent the usual ridiculous singing lessons that occur in films about singers. I am always particularly delighted by occasional passages of highly technical language which are thrown off in wonderfully casual style by the actors to show the busy professional life of the opera house in full blast.

“In which shelf is the vocal score of ‘Manon’, Signor Trenelli?”

“In the third from the left, my dear”.

This sort of impressive jargon, so characteristic of the musician at work, is provided by the script-writers to show that success in the Arts is not a matter of talent alone, but hard, hard grind as well.

I think that the paramount difficulty of producing a satisfactory *period* musical, is to reconcile the various styles that seem to be inevitable in such a picture—the Polonaise from ‘Mignon’, and other ‘classical excerpts’, and the concessions to modern taste in the shape of the would-be hit-tunes by a contemporary composer. In this film, composer is perhaps too strong a word, as the titles are decorated with the imposing name of Nicholas Brodsky. Brodsky has finally attained his life’s ambition and reached Hollywood, where I hope he will remain. On Brodsky’s work I will have to content myself by quoting a note from John Huntley’s frankly eulogistic book “British Film Music”, where he says: “Brodsky is one of the most prominent of our film musicians who employ the

Hollywood system of having a large number of collaborators and orchestrators engaged on each score, whereby the composer (*sic*) may concentrate on the production of the straightforward melodies, which are then passed on for orchestration and working-out”. This system I have attacked in other issues of *SIGHT AND SOUND*; even Hollywood may well have something to learn from Brodsky in this field.

*Three Little Words* is also a film about professional musicians of a kind, though it is completely honest about the groping hit-or-miss methods which the successful though musically illiterate producer of popular songs employs. Red Skelton gives a performance that is, for him, a miracle of restraint, and the film is further distinguished by Fred Astaire, who dances superbly, and composes shockingly bad verse with the utmost conviction; both performers were for me, as you will readily guess, distractions put in the way of my contemplation of the enchanting Vera-Ellen. But seriously, I expect you thought *The Toast of New Orleans* a better film than *Three Little Words*—and technically speaking it may well be so—but to me they were not comparable. Both might be described as “back-stage” stories, but one produced a picture of operatic life that was completely farcical, whereas the other, for all the usual conventions of mysterious orchestras miraculously appearing on cue at midnight on ocean liners, set out to entertain without hocus-pocus of any kind and succeeded in doing so. There is material for a good debate here, but I feel that the pseudo-folk-dances in the Bayou swamps, while attempting to be documentary in spirit, were in the result merely Hollywood ballet. I really don’t know whether the extraordinary Pinkerton scene from “Butterfly” was supposed to be funny all the way through or not—I suspect not. But it was ridiculous in execution, even if not in conception. Mario Lanza, like the male heroes of *Annie Get Your Gun* and *Carousel*, appeared as an extraordinarily unattractive creature, the idealised American male, selfish, brutal and domineering.

*Three Little Words* had no pretensions to be anything but a run-of-the-mill musical; but it had good tunes, superlative dancing, adequate direction, and—Vera-Ellen. Please give me a photograph of her on this page as your New Year present to me.

Your sincere Music Critic,

ANTONY HOPKINS.



New Year photograph, as requested by Antony Hopkins, of Vera-Ellen



# TELEVISION

AS I WRITE THESE NOTES immediately after Christmas, I feel it is the Christmas programmes which should be uppermost in my mind. Not only are they freshest in the memory, but report has it that at least as far as one item, *Cinderella*, was concerned, orders went out from the highest authority that to show the world of commercial entertainment that its unco-operative behaviour did not matter a rap, no reasonable expense was to be spared in its production. As a result, B.B.C. Television proved that it could stage a pantomime calculated to do credit to any theatre in London, and I do not imagine that any who like that sort of thing were displeased; to suggest that an opportunity was missed to recreate the Cinderella myth in the television medium is perhaps to be more purist than is appropriate to this festive season.

As I look back over the last two or three weeks, however, it is not *Cinderella* or anything like it which persistently recurs to me, but a programme called *Probation Office*, the second in a series with the title *The Course of Justice*, broadcast on Friday, December 22nd. (I regret to say I missed the first in the series). A young trainee probation officer is being shown the day-to-day work of the probation office. She is present at interviews held by the senior officer, and goes with her on her visits. Through the trainee's eyes, and through her questions, we watch and learn about the probation officer's problems and, even more importantly, the background out of which those problems arise.

This kind of treatment is very familiar, of course, to those who know their documentary film. Normally, it is difficult to see what direct and specific influence film technique is likely to have on television technique; as I suggested in an earlier article, to watch a film televised is little different from watching a play or sports event or anything else through the peephole of the television screen. The technique of documentary, however, may well lend itself to television in a special sense, and we may yet find the documentary impulse reborn in the television field.

The documentary film, for all its many excellences and achievements, has always held, in my view, a slightly uneasy place in the cinema, because of an inherent dichotomy from which it can rarely free itself. This dichotomy is revealed in Grierson's definition, "the creative treatment of actuality". Documentary involves, above all, a representation of the actual, the real, but actuality tends to be shapeless and chaotic and confused; as soon as we begin to interpret it, to impose a shape and a pattern on it, then the objective picture of life in the raw which we wish to represent begins to melt away. Most documentary film makers have been aware of this difficulty, and have struggled to maintain their hold on actuality by fighting against the tendency to impose patterns; hence their opposition to the "artificial" patterns of fiction, to the use of professional actors, and the like.

Their position has been an uneasy one because whether, in fact, this is the right solution to their problem, whether they are not mistaking the actual for the real, and whether any work of art can be achieved without patternising of the most fundamental kind, is all open to question.

In television, however, which is a far more ephemeral medium than the film, this dichotomy becomes unimportant. The immediate and the actual are so native to the television medium, that the careful shaping one is entitled to look for in a well-made film (to say nothing of a work of film art) are not looked for in the televised programme,

On the other hand, even the television viewer is entitled to careful and skilful presentation in his documentary programme. To illustrate what I mean by a negative example, let me refer for a moment to the series of demonstrations in portrait painting now being televised by Henry Carr under the title *The Seeing Eye*. I am following these with attention and sympathy because I happen to be interested in the subject, but I find them a continual disappointment. Henry Carr paints his portrait, and endeavours to talk to viewers at the same time, introducing illustrations of various kinds (for example, the works of old masters) into his talk. This kind of one-man mental juggling simply does not come off. It must be a great strain on the painter, and a sense of strain is borne by the viewer. Here, it seems to me, is an example of inadequate thought given to presentation; or perhaps the thought has been merely misguided.

The achievement of *Probation Office* was that it was written and presented with all the skill of the best kind of documentary; no more, and yet no less. The actors who played in it (and be it noted that they were all, with one exception, trained professionals) were well chosen and directed, and achieved the kind of realism in their performances which film documentary has tried to achieve through the non-actor. Variety of scene was combined with easy continuity, and the whole production gave a real sense of the squalid, shiftless social background, sometimes irresponsible, sometimes pathetic, in which delinquency breeds, and against which the probation and allied services have constantly to battle. I can only add that if I were a young writer today experimenting in television drama, I should be studying how to endow my work with some of the vivid, vital realism of *Probation Office* instead of imitating stage *Cinderellas* larded out with a few film shots, for I am sure that it is in this direction that future progress lies.

ERNEST LINDGREN.

## THE SOUND TRACK

THE SOUND TRACK CONSISTS of three elements: dialogue, music and sound effects. A good deal of film music is now of course available on gramophone records, and a more specialised pleasure is the collection of recorded sound effects. The wind machine, for instance, may be heard dramatically in the Prologue to *Scott of the Antarctic* (H.M.V.C3834), where it is used as a climax and a link in the music of Vaughan Williams. The sound of the sea may be heard as an accompaniment to Laurence Olivier's delivery of "To be or not to be" in the *Hamlet* set (H.M.V.C3755), and Walton and Olivier again show how well they can use sound in the Funeral March from *Hamlet* (H.M.V. C3757). The stately tempo of the march is accentuated by the roar of the cannons as the soldiers on the platforms above Elsinore castle fire a final salute.

For more spectacular effects, there is the sound of the great flight of arrows at the Battle of Agincourt in *Henry V* (H.M.V. C3585): but the recorded effect is not the same sound as in the film. The excitement of the incident is recalled by Walton's musical ride, but in the film the arrow sound was produced by a very simple device (basically, elastic bands) of a deeper, more booming and thudding quality than the different method used for the H.M.V. recording. The Disney sound track records contain a wealth of effects, including the "reversed" sounds often used in cartoon work. The cymbal, it has been found, is more fun if it starts as a tremulous sound

(continued on page 422)



# UNITED STATES versus HOLLYWOOD

## *The Case History of an Anti-Trust Suit—1*

Ernest Borneman

On December 31, 1946, twenty-seven years after Mr. Zukor's dramatic unification of the manufacturing, wholesaling and retail selling branches of the motion picture industry, the United States' sixth attempt to break the link between producers, distributors and theatre owners was repulsed, with equally dramatic vehemence, by Circuit Judge Augustus N. Hand, District Judge Henry W. Goddard and District Judge John Bright of the Southern District Court of New York in a suit brought by the Anti-Trust Division of the Justice Department, against the eight major motion picture companies under Sections 1 and 2 of the Act of July 2, 1890, entitled "An Act to Protect Trade and Commerce Against Unlawful Restraints and Monopolies", commonly referred to as the Sherman Act.

The division of the industry into its three branches goes back as far as 1902, when a San Francisco exhibitor, Harry J. Miles, established the modern pattern of film distribution by setting up an office to purchase film prints from producers and lease them to exhibitors at a rental amounting to one half of the price he had paid the producers. Because these films were being exchanged between exhibitors, rather than sold to them as had been the previous custom, his office became known as a "film exchange"—a term still in use among all distributors to define the film vaults on which their regional system of distribution is physically and legally based. By 1907, between 125 and 150 film exchanges had arisen, while the number of producers was still less than ten. The next year, 1908, these producers formed the first horizontal monopoly in the history of the American motion picture industry, the Motion Picture Patents Company, and in 1910 the first vertical monopoly was formed by the establishment of the General Film Company as a distribution subsidiary of the Patents Company. While the Patents Company agreed to lease its films only to those exchanges and exhibitors that dealt exclusively in the films it had produced, and at prices not lower than those stipulated by the producers, the General Film Company monopolised the exchanges themselves, by buying up sixty-eight of them and driving the others out of business by the simple expedient of cutting off their film supply. This precipitated the Federal Government's first injunction against the motion picture industry. In 1915, charging that the combination was illegal and a conspiracy in restraint of trade, it declared the contracts held by both companies as null and void. What the General Film Company had proved, however, was not forgotten. "Through its ability to influence, usually to determine, the price to be paid to the producers and the rentals to be charged to exhibitors, the whole-selling branch of the industry had acquired the balance of power".

The one independent exchange which had resisted the demands of the General Film Company even prior to Federal Government action, was owned by William Fox, who opened the second channel of vertical integration by building his own studio: this marked the entry of the distributor into production. After the dissolution of the General Film Company, a group of exchanges, newly freed from the yoke of the distribution monopoly, decided to follow Fox's example by going into production for themselves under the name Metro-Picture Corporation. A year later, in 1916, Adolph Zukor, head of a production company named Famous Players, reversed the process by going into distribution. He approached William W. Hodkinson, head of a distribution firm named Paramount Pictures, with a suggestion for the merger of the two companies. When Hodkinson refused, he was

"... the largest returns to the industry result from exhibiting pictures to the public and not from manufacturing them... The gross annual return of the 15,000 American theatres during 1919 will be \$8,000,000,000 and... the total amount the producers will receive will not be over \$90,000,000... Mr Zukor, president of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation (a motion picture producing company) has developed a plan to increase the earnings and percentage of profit to the corporation (by expanding their operations into the theatre field). Should this plan be carried out, they will become the most important exhibitors of motion pictures in America as well as the leading producers and distributors... He plans to build or acquire about 50 theatres properly located in the important cities of the country and several additional ones in the theatrical districts of New York and sell his products direct to the people and take the resulting profits... This circuit of key theatres will enable his corporation to dominate the motion picture industry in this country and at the same time increase the percentage of profits".

(From a confidential report rendered by Mr H. D. H. Connick to the firm of Kuhn, Loeb and Company on an application by Mr Adolph Zukor of the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation to float the first public issue of motion picture securities (ten million dollars) during the year 1919.)

The suit was first filed on July 20, 1938. Thurman Arnold was then in charge of the Department of Justice's Anti-Trust Division and his brief, charging the majors with 28 separate offences, paired the principal objective of theatre divorce—merit with the secondary objective of "abolishing all monopolistic practices in the motion picture industry". He asked for a permanent injunction, the appointment of trustees, and a court order cancelling all contracts violating these objectives while the defendants, on their side, steadily denied the very existence of monopoly. But in March, 1939 the Distributors, on their own, established a new Trade Practice Code which went some way towards meeting the Government's purpose. In August 1939, however, Thurman Arnold ruled the new code illegal. In June 1940 the actual trial began, after thirteen postponements, and ended three days later with an adjournment to permit negotiation between the defendants and the plaintiff. For all practical purposes the case, in this manner, was "settled out of court", for in October of the same year a "Consent Decree" was published which was, in effect, a compromise, offering minor concessions to the Government in exchange for the major concession of leaving theatre control in the hands of the "Big Five".

The defendants interpreted this temporary "consent decree" as a permanent approval of their trade practices, and were considerably put out when the Government began to negotiate for a new Decree. Thurman Arnold had become an Appeals Judge, and the majors had come to believe that the Justice Department had lost interest in them when, in August 1944, the assistant attorney-general, Robert L. Wright, moved for a trial. On October 8, 1945, the trial opened in Foley Square.

For 20 days Robert L. Wright hurled some three hundred documents, secretly and felicitously collected, at the startled



deposed as head of his own company and Zukor, with the aid of another producer, Jesse L. Lasky, merged the companies into what became the first of the modern "majors": the Paramount-Famous Players-Lasky combine.

The name of the company, Famous Players, marked the establishment of the "star system". Instead of offering so many pictures or so many feet of film, Zukor offered to sell so many Mary Pickfords or John Barrymores or Geraldine Farrars; but because he did not believe that there were enough stars to supply a year's whole programme, he decided to divide the annual production schedule into so many "A-pictures" and so many "B-pictures", the latter featuring "known moving picture players" rather than the "famous players" of the A-series. As a result of this practice, actors' wages, as in the case of Charlie Chaplin, rose from about \$75 a week to \$10,000 a week within a period of less than a year. Simultaneously, film rentals were increased sharply and the practice of "block-booking" (i.e. selling a whole year's product in advance, sight unseen) became universal. If the exhibitor wanted such popular "famous players" as Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks or Charlie Chaplin, he therefore had to take whatever the producer might care to throw in with these A-pictures.

As a natural reaction to this practice, the exhibitors, in their turn, began to organise into a horizontal combine with the hope of building a monopoly of their own. In 1917, one year after the formation of the Paramount-Famous Players-Lasky combine, the First National Exhibitors Circuit, parent organization of today's Warner Brothers-First National combine, was created to act as a purchasing pool for twenty-six of the most powerful exhibitors. For a while, Zukor's power seemed seriously threatened, but in 1918 the Federal Trade Commission opened its second attack against monopoly in the industry, and although the defendant named was not First National but the Stanley Booking Corporation, a booking combine of Philadelphia exhibitors, the Federal judgment had the effect of exerting a temporary restraint upon the new integration movement in the distribution and exhibition fields.

The Stanley Corporation was declared to be guilty of unfair methods of competition, but the restraint upon horizontal monopoly among exhibitors could not for long prevent the vertical integration of the industry. A year later, in 1919, First National decided to break still deeper into Zukor's territory by organizing its own production company and Zukor, as a counter-measure, decided to invade First National's territory by organizing his own theatre network. Thus, from two sides simultaneously, the full integration of production, distribution and exhibition had been achieved.

Quickly the other companies followed suit. In 1921, Samuel Goldwyn, a producer, bought a half interest in approximately thirty theatres, and at the same time Loew's Inc., a \$25 million theatre-owning company, bought Metro Picture Corporation, the production organization that had been formed in 1915 by the independent distributors who were trying to break the production monopoly of the Patent Company. This was the predecessor of today's Loew's-M-G-M combine. The other three of today's "Big Five" (Paramount, M-G-M, R.K.O., Warner Brothers and Twentieth Century-Fox) were formed similarly. R.K.O. began as a merger of the parent company, F.B.O. Productions Inc., with one of the country's largest theatre chains, Keith-Albee Orpheum. Warner Brothers was the result of a merger with First National as a production unit and the Stanley Company as a theatre circuit. Twentieth Century-Fox was the result of a merger between William Fox's old Fox Film Corporation as production unit, and 20th Century Pictures as theatre circuit.

These are the "Big Five" of the motion picture business, the "fully integrated" production, distribution and exhibition companies. Add to them the "little three", Columbia, Universal and United Artists, which are basically production and distribution companies without affiliated theatre circuits, and you get the group known as the "eight majors", which was arraigned before the New York district Court in the Government's eight-year old Anti-Trust suit.

galaxy of defendants' counsels. Letters from exhibitors, carbons of contract forms, witnesses' transcriptions and an F.B.I. investigation of 500 towns of less than 25,000 inhabitants, were included in the plaintiff's *prima facie* case. Concentrating on "divorcement", the Government did not press charges of monopoly, but left them open for a possible appeal to the Supreme Court.

The charges had not changed very greatly during the 25 years that had passed since the Federal Trade Commission, in 1921, had filed its first complaint against the predecessors of today's defendants, and the brief filed then might just as well have served Mr. Wright on the day he opened his attack upon the defendants at Foley Square:

"On July 22, 1919 the board of directors of Famous Players-Lasky Corporation . . . for the purpose of . . . block-booking, as distinguished from the lease of individual pictures, and for the purpose of intimidating and coercing to lease and exhibit films produced and distributed by Famous Players-Lasky Corporation adopted a . . . policy of building, owning or otherwise controlling theatres, especially . . . first-run theatres in key cities . . . Therefore it is made difficult for the small and independent producers or distributors of films to enter into or remain in the moving picture industry or market, or to lease individual pictures on merit . . ."

The period to which this 1921 brief referred, was known in the industry as "the battle for the theatres", and in many ways it corresponded to that period of England's industrial revolution to which economists now refer as "the enclosure of the commons". The battle was equally fierce. Strong-arm men and purchasing agents sent out by the majors became known among independent exhibitors as the "dynamite gang" and the "wrecking crew". Hundreds of exhibitors who had been in the industry since its infant days were driven out of business by methods which neither side in the battle now cares to remember. In 1920 the few remaining independents began to combine into the first of today's exhibitors' organisations, the Motion Picture Theatre Operators of America. For many a gaudy month the battle seasawed from coast to coast. The exhibitors held their ground as long as they owned it; they lost it when First National, largest of the exhibitors' organisations, was broken by Famous Players-Lasky. They lost it, characteristically, because Zukor bought out the key members of the pool, one after the other, till the whole organisation collapsed from the inside. Sam Katz, the head of the Balaban and Katz theatre chain in Chicago, who had carried the spearhead of the battle against Famous Players by advocating the transformation of the company into a fully integrated production-distribution-exhibition organisation able to compete with Zukor on his own ground, at long last himself joined Famous Players. The battle which had begun as a manoeuvre for the maximum number of theatres, regardless of location and size, then suddenly began to veer round to a strategy for the acquisition of so-called "first-run" theatres (i.e. theatres large enough and sufficiently well appointed to serve as show cases where new productions could be presented at special prices).

Since the operating costs of large and small theatres do not differ as much as their admission prices, and since the public seemed willing to be grossly overcharged for the right of seeing a new film earlier than their neighbours, the first-run theatres henceforth became the key-stones of the majors' theatre empire. "Approximately 50 per cent. of the revenue from a film is derived from first-run showings within six



months from the date of the release of the picture", said the Federal Trade Commission in 1921. This rate has not basically altered since.

But the blame for the growing rigidity of the industry did not entirely rest with the majors. The independent exhibitors themselves, with the small business man's preference for a sure thing, helped to strengthen the majors' monopoly over production by refusing to show pictures made by the independent producers. Since the independent producer, by dint of the majors' distribution monopoly, could not possibly obtain first-run exhibition, he had no chance of obtaining any run at all, and if exhibitors refused to show films which had not had the benefit of first-run exhibition, the whole attempt to produce independently became futile.

In point of fact, this meant that control of the total theatre field became vested in the control of a diminutively small number of first-run theatres, and the monopoly vested in the control of the first-run houses allowed the forcing of prices in all other houses, regardless of whether these subsequent-run houses were actually owned by the majors or not.

Control of first-run theatres meant, in effect, control of the screen, and the process of doling out licences designating this theatre as first-run and that as second, third, fourth or nth-run was the means by which the control over the whole of the motion picture industry was first achieved, and is still maintained. The regional assignment of "runs" became known as "zoning", while the temporal assignment of runs was known as "clearance". These two terms were the hinges upon which the whole argument turned.

During the trial the majors contended that since none of them owned more than a very small fraction of the nation's theatres, they could not be held individually responsible for any monopoly control of the market. Conceding this to be true, the Government argued that although none of the defendants owned sufficient theatres to control the market singly, all of them together owned enough first-run theatres to exert a monopoly in conjunction, and that no proof of actual conspiracy had to be provided since, in effect, the very existence of the majors was sufficient to exclude all competition. Collectively, the Government claimed, 3,137 theatres, or 70 per cent. of the nation's first-run market, were controlled by the majors, and 437 of these theatres were being operated under "pooling arrangements"—that is to say, two or more theatres, normally in competition, were being operated as a unit whose policy was controlled by the majors.

Theatre pools, operated by renegade independents, had a way of breaking the morale of the exhibitors' united front. Pool operators frequently specified that none of the pool members might acquire other theatres within their area without first offering them for inclusion in the pool. In this way, the pool had a tendency to expand and perpetuate itself, and this expansion was further favoured by the pool's willingness to lease any of its theatres to any "independent" exhibitor in return for a share of the profits. Frequently, the mere threat by one of the Big Five, or by one of the big pools, to erect a theatre in a given area therefore made it necessary for the independent to buy up the projected theatre—and in many cases the terms of purchase made by the distributor or the pool might well contain references to certain concessions which, in effect, might henceforth make the independent exhibitor a part of the distributor's network.

There was no way, short of voluntary surrender to the majors, by which an exhibitor could raise the status of his

theatre from, say, third to second-run, or second to first-run. In October 1938, the N.R.A., in the draft for a new Code embodying a standard licence agreement said: "Only in the motion picture business does the situation exist where individuals of creditable standing, with large investments, are unable to purchase in the open market the products which they desire and need for the conduct of their business". In June 1946, during the trial at Foley Square, a brief submitted, significantly enough, not by the exhibitors but by the Society of Independent Motion Picture Producers, enlarged upon this concept by saying: "In other lines of merchandising, if a store is given an 'exclusive' or a priority on some item, it by no means follows that it also has the same rights to all competitive items produced by other competing manufacturers. (A first-run house is first-run not only for one of the majors, but for all of them.) . . . No other theatre may become first-run by the ordinary competitive technique of paying more for the privilege of a first-run . . . As in a caste system, a theatre is either born into the aristocracy or not".

If the owner of a second-run house was willing to extend first-run privileges to a picture produced by someone other than one of the majors, he had to be prepared to do without any of the majors' pictures henceforth. In other words, he had to be prepared to go out of business. This, as a matter of fact, could happen for even slighter reasons than co-operation with independent producers or distributors. In December 1939, the firm of South Side Theatres completed a 1,050 seat de luxe house at a cost of \$80,000 at Inglewood near Los Angeles. The house was expected to obtain second or third-run rights and to pay its way with admission prices of 30 or 35 cents, but the distributors were unwilling to grant any but fifth-run rights which, at an admission price of 15 cents, made it impossible for the owner to make ends meet. So, the house remained closed and store facilities in the same building, which were to be rented to other firms, also remained vacant.

At the trial, when the Government recounted cases of this kind to prove that the whole system of assigning "runs" was tantamount to a conspiracy in restraint of trade, the majors replied that the only thing of value which they, as distributors, had to sell was the right to exhibit a picture and that the spatial and temporary exclusiveness of this right was the essence of the thing that was being bargained for. To this, the Government replied that it would be perfectly legal for a distributor to sell Theatre B a film to be played on a date any given number of days behind Theatre A, but that it was illegal for the distributor and Theatre A to agree on the number of days before the film would become available to Theatre B.

When the "Little Three" companies (those having an integrated production-distribution set-up but not active as exhibitors) were trying to dissociate themselves from the "Big Five" during the trial by saying that since they owned no theatres they could not possibly be guilty of conspiracy in the exhibition field, the Government replied that they had been guilty of perpetuating the monopoly of the Big Five by favouring the latter's theatres over those operated by independent exhibitors, and that the method used to perpetuate the monopoly had been the offering of more favourable terms of clearance and of smaller blocks of product to the theatres affiliated with the Big Five.

This method of selling product unseen, in advance and in more or less sizeable blocks, had been the exhibitors' second

*(continued on page 424)*



# REVALUATIONS—9

Roger Manvell

## L'ATALANTE, 1934

Production: J. L. Nounes-Gaumont. Direction: Jean Vigo. Scenario: Jean Guinée. Adaptation and Dialogue: Jean Vigo, Albert Rièrre. Photography: Boris Kaufman. Design: Francis Jourdan. Music: Maurice Jaubert. With—Dita Parlo, Jean Dasté and Michel Simon.

TO SEE *L'Atalante* again, in spite of its indifferent sound and its occasionally rough-and-ready continuity, is to revive the indelible impression it originally made on the imagination. I first saw it about fifteen years ago, at about the same time as *Zéro de Conduite*, Vigo's other major film which he made in 1933. In 1934 Vigo died. His death was the greatest loss that the French cinema has ever sustained. He was a completely fearless film-maker, and a man who was determined to use the film as an artist should, for the purposes of honest expression. He made both *Zéro de Conduite* and *L'Atalante* against every possible obstacle that ill-health and inadequate budgets could produce, and if both films bear the signs of his technical inexperience, neither can be criticised, in my view, for lack of imagination or of clarity of purpose. The first is filled with the artist's scorn for the petty tyrannies of life which occur at a bare and mean school for boys, and the second is a tender-bitter story of a newly-married couple who start their life together on a barge. The story begins with their marriage ("She had to be different", grumble the wedding party over the bride's choice of a husband) and ends with their reunion and reconciliation after she has run away from the barge and her self-centred, jealous husband to discover the glamorous city life in Paris of which she has dreamed so long.

In its apparently artless realism *L'Atalante* is the direct ancestor of the modern Italian realist school, exemplified by such films as Visconti's *Ossessione* and de Sica's *Bicycle Thieves*. It is not concerned with the niceties of studio lighting, the elegant use of the camera and careful montage all designed to achieve a succession of dramatic points in the development of the story—the technique which is characteristic of films like *Quai des Brumes* and *Le Jour se Lève*. Yet these films are also supposed to possess the quality of realism or, as it is sometimes put, poetic realism; which only goes to show how loose our use of the term "realism" has become, or how wide that quality is in films. The realism of *L'Atalante* is as spontaneous, as "un-arranged" as possible; the realism of *Quai des Brumes* and *Le Jour se Lève* is of a kind in which everything spontaneous is stripped away to reveal the reality beneath—the strong, harsh relationships of a particular group of people selected for their dramatic and significant contrast of character. The characterisation of the hero and heroine in *L'Atalante* is quite undeveloped in this artificially dramatic way, though the naturally eccentric mate, played by Michel Simon, and the professionally eccentric travelling pedlar should, I think, be regarded as characters introduced to form a deliberate contrast to the "normal" skipper and his young wife.



"L'Atalante". Dita Parlo

It is in this conception of his hero and heroine that the nature of Vigo's realism can best be realised. Carné's and Prevert's heroes and heroines are human symbols; though Gabin's earthy good nature may make the characters he plays appear realistic, they are in fact symbols of human goodness placed in strong dramatic contrast to the characters who incarnate evil in all the fatalistic Carné-Prevert films. But the skipper of the *Atalante* is as ordinary a young man as the one standing next to you on a French 'bus, and so is his wife, who combines a natural shyness with an innocent eagerness to regard marriage as an initiation into the adventure and glamour of travel and city life. She is typical of any simple woman rather than artificially developed in order to make a dramatic "character". Vigo, however, illuminates our observation of this couple in their love-making and horseplay and quarrelling by means of the so-called surrealist interludes which he introduces into the film.

Although Vigo made his films very much as an individual artist, he was in effect one of the avant-garde film-makers in France. Surrealism in the French cinema either took the form of the conscious use of dream-imagery in the representation of experiences difficult or impossible to present directly (as, for example, in *The Seashell and the Clergyman*), or its use in free association (as in Bunuel's films *Le Chien Andalou* and *L'Age d'Or*). Vigo's surrealism in *Zéro de Conduite* and especially in *L'Atalante* is obviously of the former kind. It is not strictly surrealism at all, for in surrealist art the conscious mind should play as small a part as possible. But Vigo was well aware what he was doing. When the separation occurs soon after their marriage, frustrated desire and remorse for what they have done combine to drive them half-crazy; the young skipper dives into the canal and swims under water while an image of his wife in her white bridal dress with its





Two scenes from "L'Atalante": left, a barge interior, with Dita Parlo and Jean Daste: right, the mate (Michel Simon) discovers the wife after she has run away to Paris

veils floating slowly turns round and round. When they reach the coast he rushes madly out to the sea verge in obedience to Freud. Over-and-above this deliberate use of the water imagery, the half fantastic wooing of the girl by the mate in his cramped and filthy cabin filled with mysterious and sinister relics from his travels all over the globe, and by the showman-peddler in the little bar to which the morose, jealous and unromantic husband takes his wife, together represent a world which is half image, half reality. Vigo is quite prepared to use these forms of partial fantasy to underline the psychological situation of his hero and heroine, who, as we have seen, are in themselves a very ordinary couple. The mingling of these two worlds—the natural, grey world of the bargee and the illuminated world of fantasy—is completely satisfying in *L'Atalante*.

There is also a rich vein of humour running through the whole film, and Michel Simon as the mate creates one of the finest comic characters to be found in the French cinema. Vigo's sense of humour entirely preserves his films from catching the disease of the avant-garde—a portentous seriousness about psychological matters. The music, too, composed by Maurice Jaubert, elicits the mood of many scenes, though the theme song itself, composed by Lys Gauty, is bitterly attacked by Jacques Brunius in *Experiment in the Film* when he writes about *L'Atalante*: "... before it was shown to the public the producer thought it necessary to soften what was too cruel in Vigo's outlook on life. Here and

there a song by Lys Gauty, having nothing to do with the story, sweetened with its sugary sentiment scenes in which real emotion, veiled by irony, burst out in brief moments of ardour and anguish. For some months the film took the title of the song, *Le Chaland qui Passe* (The Passing Barge). But Vigo had left a vigorous imprint on his characters and images, and *Le Chaland qui Passe* is forgotten and only *L'Atalante* remembered". Jaubert's music constantly refreshes the film and prevents it becoming morbid or oppressive.

The main faults of this film are, curiously enough, to a certain extent assets. The photography is very rough—but how could it be otherwise unless the barge had been made artificially in a studio or every scene shot in special lighting and special weathers? This is an everyday story photographed in everyday lighting, and the narrow interiors do not allow for fancy shots. The continuity is also rough, but to have made it smooth and rhythmic would have been to make it, dramatically speaking, self-conscious. Episode follows episode without any special attempt to create dramatic closing scenes or achieve significant pay-off lines; when an episode has done its job in the story, the scene just fades and the next begins. But the main principle of such realistic films as *L'Atalante*, to achieve unity of atmosphere and faithfulness to the kind of life shown, is maintained, and the film, Vigo's main work, can always be shown as proof of the fact that his untimely death lost us one of the most imaginative of film-makers.

(This concludes the present series of *Revaluations*).

#### (THE SOUND TRACK, continued from page 417)

and rises rapidly to a crescendo: the plucked harp-string is much more twangy when reversed on the track. The human voice can be very suitable for a Disney rabbit if played backwards and at twice the normal speed.

An extraordinary record called *Destination Moon* (Capitol CL 13371) presents a kind of children's version of the Georg Pal film. It is very trite and pretentious, starting with the blowing of whistles and a loudspeaker shouting "Stand by for the Take-Off: the blast will be radio-active". The radio man, we are then told, has been taken sick at the last moment, and

"young Tony" is coming along instead. The air lock closes. They "count off for firing" to some feeble chords of Billy May's music. The space ship roars into the air with a resonant, clanging sound that seems strangely familiar. The ship lands, again with that odd noise. It leaves once more for the earth, and the sound is repeated. It was a mixture of a dynamo, a gliding frequency test and—our old friend the oil well, straight out of Helen van Dongen's tracks for Robert Flaherty's *Louisiana Story*.

JOHN HUNTLEY.



# CORRESPONDENCE

*The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND,*

Sir,—In view of the praise accorded to Joseph Mankiewicz's script for *All About Eve* and the fact that it is being honoured by publication in book form, it is interesting to note that this script derives from a short story, no better than most of its kind, which appeared in the March, 1946, issue of *Woman and Beauty*: "The Wisdom of Eve" by Mary Orr.

Hollywood has been so frequently (and hypocritically) attacked for its carefree dissection of literary masterpieces that it has become wilfully immune to such criticism. Is it ever praised for the times when it expands the unpromising, and often downright bad, novelette or short story into something worthwhile?

Yours faithfully,

JOHN WILCOX,  
Thornton Heath, Surrey.

## NEW PERIODICAL

RACCORDS (6). Director: Michel Flacon. Editor: Gilles Jacob.  
(23 Rue Raynouard, Paris 16. 100 frs.)

With *La Revue du Cinema* no longer appearing, and the weekly *L'Ecran Francais* lost to the communists, there has been a lack of periodical French film criticism for some time. Now *Raccords*, after several months in a very modest format and printed by a photographic process, appears with a handsome cover, glossy paper, stills and agreeable typography. It seems likely to become the established organ of the younger French criticism, which represents more extremely a trend that could be previously found in parts of *La Revue du Cinema*. This includes a strong Welles idolatry and a certain amount of lively academic speculation that seems, perhaps, on this side of the channel, somewhat remote. Of course the extravagances of *The Lady from Shanghai* (a characteristic still of which, with six Rita Hayworths, decorates the cover) offers a field day for the psychological-sociological critic: few, all the same, will go all the way with Hubert Grenier in his zealous and carefully annotated act of homage to the film. With a similar approach, Gilles Jacob (also the editor) examines *Caccia Tragica* and finds

great riches in de Santis. This issue also contains an interview with Emmer and a review of *Domenica d'Agosto* (both excellent), an admirable rebuke to *Dieu a Besoin des Hommes*, and the first part of an interesting piece of research on camera movement, "Propos sur le Travelling", by Michel Flacon.

## COMPETITION

*Competition No. 10.* An investigation into the formative years of some famous film characters: you are to imagine that you are the headmaster or headmistress of a school attended by the following pupils—Norma Desmond (*Sunset Boulevard*), Charles Foster Kane, Harry Lime, Regina Hubbard (*The Little Foxes*), Annie Oakley (*Annie Get Your Gun*), Eve Harrington (*All About Eve*), Louis Mazzini (*Kind Hearts and Coronets*), Willie Stark (*All the King's Men*), Christian Faber (*The Astonished Heart*), Henri Verdoux. Write a conduct report (limit, 200 words) on any one of these. Usual prizes to the best entries: closing date, February 28.

*Report on No. 8.* Possible misunderstandings by prominent personalities on the lines of General Montgomery, who is reported once to have called for a film entitled *The Red Army*, only to discover it dealt with the ways of the red ant.

Sir Alfred Munnings: *Tony Draws a Horse*.

Dr. Julian Huxley: *The Lion Has Wings*.

The Arts Council: *Die Dreigroschenoper* (Threehalfpenny Opera).

LEWIS MATHEWS, 10, Cleveland Road,  
Wolverhampton (1st prize, 25/-)

Mistaken Command Performances:

Chairman of the Liberal Party: *Millions Like Us*.

Mr. George Allison: *Arsenal*.

Dr. Marie Stopes: *Birth of a Nation*.

M. W. BERESFORD, 12, Belvedere Road,  
Alwoodley (2nd prize, 10/6)

Honourable Mentions:

Clement Davies: *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (R. A. Nelson).

Winston Churchill: *Western Union* (R. A. Newport).

Stalin: *Congress Dances* (P. A. Jaggard).

Head of the British Road Services: *Carmen* (N. M. Hunnings).

Gerald Heard: *Men of Two Worlds* (O. Gordon).

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complaint for more than thirty years. At the third session of the 76th Congress, during the hearings before the Committee on Interstate Commerce in the House of Representatives, Miss Jeannette Willensky, Secretary of the Independent Motion Picture Theatre Owners of Eastern Pennsylvania, explained the exhibitors' view of this process of block-booking and blind-selling with a degree of blandness never since equalled. "Columbia promises to make a minimum of 32 and a maximum of 40 . . . the work sheet states that the programme will be selected from properties of the company and from additional outstanding stories acquired during the year. First-National-Warner Bros. Pictures will make 27. Only numbers appear on the contracts and work sheets. If you buy from First National, you get numbers 951 to 977. If you buy from Warner Bros. you get numbers to 901 to 927. And the distributor also reserves the right to alter the prices and terms of four pictures, by merely giving a notice to the exhibitor . . . Fox Pictures will make a maximum of 50 and a minimum of 40 . . . The names of features will be given in the trade journals during the year . . . R.K.O. will make 45 pictures, identified only by numbers 601 to 646. No description of the subjects. Universal will make 36 pictures, founded on published works . . ."

The designation of play dates by the distributor has always provoked the most bitter opposition among exhibitors. Theatre attendance varies from day to day in a fairly regular pattern: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday each contribute 10 per cent. of the week's gross; Friday provides 15 per cent, Saturday 20 per cent. and Sunday 25 per cent. If the distributor made a cash deal and specified Monday to Thursday as the days of the week on which the exhibitor was licensed to show the picture, the exhibitor naturally felt bitter. If, on the other hand, the distributor made a percentage deal, and specified Friday to Sunday as play dates, the exhibitor felt rooked for different reasons.

The Department of Justice, in its proposed findings of fact, said on June 22, 1946: "The differentials in admission prices set by a distributor in licensing a particular picture in theatres exhibiting on different runs in the same competitive area are calculated to encourage as many patrons as possible to see the picture in prior-run theatres where they will pay higher prices than on subsequent runs. The reason for this is that if 10,000 people of a city population are ultimately to see the picture—no matter on what run—the gross revenue to be realised from their patronage is increased relatively to the increase in numbers seeing it at higher prices in prior-run theatres. In effect, the distributor, by the fixing of minimum admission prices, attempts to give the prior run exhibitors as near a monopoly of the patronage as possible".

During the trial the majors held that all these practices, though they might occasionally turn to the disadvantage of an odd exhibitor, were essential to the survival of the industry. To this the Government replied that if the faithful application of the Sherman Act would really lead to the ruin of the industry, it would be up to the defendants to petition Congress, as the proper legal body, to grant them the right to maintain a special monopolistic position, but that the Department of Justice was not authorised to alter the Sherman Act so as to keep the defendants in business.

(to be continued)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *It's a Gift*, *The Old-Fashioned Way*, *Samson and Delilah*, *Sign of the Cross*, *Cleopatra*.  
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *Pagan Love Song*, picture of Vera-Ellen.  
WARNER BROTHERS for *The Breaking Point*.  
COLUMBIA PICTURES for *The Brave Bulls*.  
A.C.T. FILMS for *Green Grow the Rushes*.  
NATIONAL FILM LIBRARY for *L'Atalante*, *Cleopatra*, *Sign of the Cross*, *La Règle du Jeu*.  
SEQUENCE for *L'Atalante*.  
DISCINA for *Lady Paname*.  
RIZZOLI-AMATO for *S. Francesco*, *Giullare di Dio*.  
SCALERA FILMS for *I Bambini ci Guardano*.  
UNIVERSALIA for *La Terra Trema*, *Prima Comunione*, *Fabiola*.  
CAPITOLIUM for *Luci del Varieta*.  
VILLANI-FINCINE for *Cronaca di un Amore*.  
ICI and FOTO CIVIRANI for *Ossessione*.  
UNIVERSALCINE for *E'Primavera* and *Sotto il Sole di Roma*.  
LUX and INTERNATIONAL FILM BUREAU for *Senza Pietà*, *Mio Figlio Professore*, *Non c'è pace tra gli ulivi*.

## CORRESPONDENTS

U.S.A.: Harold Leonard

ITALY: Robert Hawkins

FRANCE: Francis Koval

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(THE SIEGFRIED OF SEX, continued from page 412)

of hair during his days of triumph would excite no comment in Piccadilly today; when Delilah gives him his Boston crew-cut, one merely feels that the football season has begun.

There broods too a strange monotony over the design of Miss Lamarr's wardrobe. In every sequence but two, she wears the same model—what is I believe called a bolero that leaves the midriff bare, and a skirt draped rather like a sarong, cut down over her pretty thighs, and at the same time restrained from indiscretion by a lamé string. This design is carried out in a profusion of Twink shades; no attempt is made by Technicolor to mitigate the anachronistic savagery of aniline dyes, nor to give any historic air to the shot-artificial-silk cushions upon which Delilah has a most becoming fit of conscience.

Yet, if the picture seems lavishly ridiculous, and far less erotic in implication than for instance a relatively obscure morality film like *So Young*, *So Bad*, it does hold moments of great excitement and terror, which will no doubt net de Mille all the profits he anticipates. The battle where Samson slays the Philistines with an ass's jawbone, the moment when the dwarfs "make sport" of him below the huge idol of Dagon, provoke a genuine æsthetic reaction, however debased. As his brief appearance in *Sunset Boulevard* suggested, de Mille is obviously a personality not to be despised. The resurgent god of bad taste?—The Siegfried of Sex? As I heard a young man say after seeing *Samson and Delilah*, "Well, I dunno, I'm shore".



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# FILMS IN 1951

A Special Publication on British Films and Film-Makers

for the

## FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN

### Contents

#### Part 2: *The Festival and the Cinema*—

|                          |                      |    |
|--------------------------|----------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION             | Gerald Barry         | 39 |
| THE FESTIVAL FILMS       |                      | 40 |
| <i>The Telecinema:</i>   |                      |    |
| PLANNING THE EXHIBITION  | J. D. Ralph          | 43 |
| TWO DIMENSIONS OR THREE? | Raymond Spottiswoode | 44 |

#### Part 1: *British Films and Film-Makers*—

|                                                  |                    |    |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----|
| <i>The Industry:</i> J. ARTHUR RANK              | Ann McNeil         | 5  |
| <i>The Producer:</i> SIR ALEXANDER KORDA         | Campbell Dixon     | 6  |
| <i>The Studio:</i> SIR MICHAEL BALCON AND EALING | Francis Koval      | 8  |
| <i>The Director:</i> CAROL REED                  | Basil Wright       | 10 |
| <i>The Screenwriter:</i> T. E. B. CLARKE         | John Morley        | 14 |
| <i>The Cameraman:</i> JACK CARDIFF               | Mark Edwards       | 15 |
| <i>The Editor:</i> JACK HARRIS                   | Karel Reisz        | 16 |
| <i>The Actor:</i> SIR LAURENCE OLIVIER           | James Morgan       | 17 |
| <i>The Composer:</i> WILLIAM ALWYN               | Ernest Lindgren    | 19 |
| DESIGN AND COSTUME                               |                    | 21 |
| AN INDEPENDENT SPEAKS                            | Valerie Hobson     | 22 |
| 10 YEARS OF BRITISH FILMS                        | Sir Michael Balcon | 23 |
| (Illustrated inset: 24-36)                       |                    |    |

#### Part 3: *British Films Today*—

|                                                         |    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|
| PICTURE GUIDE TO CURRENT and<br>FORTHCOMING PRODUCTIONS | 46 |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----|

#### Part 4: *Films and Society*—

|                                           |                  |    |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------|----|
| JOHN GRIERSON AND THE<br>DOCUMENTARY IDEA | Forsyth Hardy    | 55 |
| THE BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CENSORS         | Margaret Hinxman | 57 |
| CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT FILMS            | Mary Field       | 59 |
| FILM SOCIETIES                            | Norman Wilson    | 61 |
| AMATEUR FILMS IN BRITAIN                  | Tony Rose        | 63 |
| THE EDINBURGH FILM FESTIVAL               | Forsyth Hardy    | 65 |
| FILMS AND SCIENCE                         | John Maddison    | 67 |

#### Part 5: *Points of Reference*—

|                                                                  |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| FILM COMPANIES AND STUDIOS                                       | 69 |
| DISTRIBUTION AND EXHIBITION DOCU-<br>MENTARY, SHORT AND NEWSREEL | 70 |
| PRODUCTION: ORGANISATIONS                                        | 71 |
| BOOKS AND PERIODICALS                                            | 71 |

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# THE INDUSTRY:

## J. ARTHUR RANK

Ann McNeil

JOSEPH ARTHUR RANK, the Yorkshire business man who, as *Time* once said, "resembles General de Gaulle, except that he does not share the look of a supercilious camel", has a strange history for a film magnate. Unlike most of the Americans, he did not grow up in the industry, but came into films late in life to construct his empire out of a series of financial manipulations, usually concerning existing companies. His background lay in the sober territory of Nonconformity and sound business acumen, not in the risks of the entertainment world. His father made a fortune in the Yorkshire mills; his wife brought him more wealth.

His entry into the film business was unusual in the extreme: he became interested in 1934 in the Methodist Religious Film Society, assisted its finances, and put up some money for *The Turn of the Tide*, a prophetically titled feature-documentary on the Yorkshire fishing villages. When he found that the film could not obtain a London screening he acquired a West End cinema in a move to break the existing monopolies. His interests expanded with extraordinary speed. This was the period of large scale city investment in the film business and Rank, Lord Luke (chairman of Bovril), Lord Portal, and a representative of the banking concern of Japhets invested in the new General Film Distributors company, formed by Mr. C. M. Woolf, who had previously built up the Gaumont British theatre chain. In 1936 the General Cinema Finance Corporation, in which the same financiers were interested, took over G.F.D. From this start the Rank interests in the three branches of the industry, production, distribution and exhibition, were built up. He secured connections with U.S. firms—Fox, Universal and United Artists—he acquired studios, himself building Pinewood; he gained control of companies, such as G. B. Kalee, which made all kinds of cinema equipment. The two most important deals, perhaps, were those which gave him control of Oscar Deutsch's Odeon circuit (he became chairman on Deutsch's death in 1942), and of the Gaumont British circuit (he finally took over from the Ostrer brothers in 1942.)

Naturally such power led to accusations of monopoly. Mr. Dalton, then President of the Board of Trade, secured an undertaking in 1943 that Rank would acquire no more cinema interests without first gaining the Board's permission. General feeling, however, was perhaps expressed by Lord Brabazon of Tara, who said in the Lords, "when a man like Rank has engaged to fight American films, he must not be worried by pinpricks".

Certainly the British cinema's record in the war and immediately post-war period owes much not only to Rank's leadership, but to his particular type of leadership. Perhaps because he had no personal experience of the production side of the business, he gave his producers a rare degree of trust and independence. Companies such as Cineguild (*Brief Encounter*, *Great Expectations*,

*Oliver Twist*), Two Cities (*The Way Ahead*, *The Way to the Stars*, *Henry V*), Individual (*The Rake's Progress*, *I See a Dark Stranger*) and Archers (*I Know Where I'm Going*, *The Red Shoes*) made many high quality pictures; freelances like Laurence Olivier were brought into the industry and given a free hand. A less successful venture was Pascal's *Caesar and Cleopatra*, whose inordinate cost was quoted time and again as an example of the industry's wasteful methods.

But it was soon clear that the war-time boom, born of the days when the cinema was often the only form of entertainment, was over. The industry had to face the full force of American competition; entertainments tax was already felt to constitute a heavy burden. The Rank organisation decided on a great gamble: it produced a number of expensive "prestige" pictures, in the hope that by sheer quality they might make themselves felt in the great American market. The plan failed. Perhaps this was due in part to the very factor that made Rank so unusual and generous a patron of talent; lacking knowledge that a man who had grown up in the trade would have possessed, he had to rely on advisers, and sometimes he was advised on insufficient information.

This harsh blow was followed by another, for which the Rank organisation was only partly responsible. The Government's enforcement of a 75 per cent. tax on American films was followed by the American decision to export no more of their product to Britain. From August 1947 to June 1948 no American films entered the country. Uncertain of how long the ban would last, and fearing that cinemas must close down unless British pictures could fill the gap, the organisation determined to produce more films at speed. In December 1947 Odeon Cinemas purchased General Cinema Finance Corporation, which meant in effect that the exhibiting side of the business was taking a greater hand in financing production. In spite of city opposition to what was clearly a risk, the shareholders trusted Rank, and the purchase went through unopposed.

But the time lag in film production proved disastrous. As Rank admitted, taking responsibility for the plan's failure, the rise in the number of films made was too sudden, talent was too thinly spread, quality fell off. Then the American films returned, and the weakened British product had to meet competition from American companies who had accumulated a year's backlog of pictures.

The industry has not yet recovered from these shocks. In November 1949 the statement to the Odeon shareholders revealed the full extent of the crisis. The Odeon 5s. shares, whose market peak two years before was 45s., then stood at only 8s. 6d.; the venture into production had failed to pay, and the total production loss for the year reached the horrifying figure of nearly £3,400,000. Since then, the policy has of necessity been one of retrenchment. Studios have been leased or sold, the number of films produced annually by the organisation has been drastically reduced.

Saddest to many people have been Rank's forced economies in three of his most enterprising projects: the objective, factual review *This Modern Age*; the cartoon venture, in which David Hand did interesting work; and the production of entertainment films for children. These, particularly the first and last, showed Rank at his

(continued on page 15)



# THE PRODUCER:

## Sir ALEXANDER KORDA

Campbell Dixon

OTHER BRITISH PRODUCERS may have done work as good as Alexander Korda's. No one else is half as famous. Talk of films, in any country you like, and someone is sure to ask, "What's Alex doing?" He is the only producer in England—or in Europe for that matter—whose name is familiar to fans all over the world in the sense that Griffith's is and Goldwyn's, and De Mille's.

Why is this? One answer, of course, is that his films, good or bad, appeal to people of many different lands, races, tongues and degrees of culture. *Lady Hamilton*, had a big war-time success (though I doubt if any money changed hands) in Russia. *The Thief of Bagdad*, dubbed in Arabic and Hindi, still holds the gorgeous East in quite substantial fee. Of *The Third Man*, it is perhaps unnecessary to say that last year one couldn't walk by Woolworth's in Heidelberg, or the open-air cafes on the Piazza San Marco, without hearing Mr. Karas' plink-a-plank reproduced by disc or string instruments purporting to be the zither.

Is such success a little vulgar? I have known film people who affected to think so. Korda is less pompous. He picks a story he likes, and if the film isn't a world hit, it's not for want of trying.

Or money. That's another thing about Korda. No matter what the state of his finances, he has always had courage. If you had been in his shoes with a Hollywood failure behind you, no apparent future on the Continent, and the price of just one production between you and failure here, would you have gambled it all on a cynical portrait of a pox-ridden, bloody-minded tyrant busily beheading wives who must have found him revolting? But *The Private Life of Henry VIII* was the beginning of a new era in British film production, and made Korda the most talked of producer-director in the world.

His enemies, of course, say it's not courage: it's just megalomania and extravagance. But then, they have been saying the same thing for 30 years of Goldwyn and De Mille, great spenders both. The odd fact remains that in the toughest business in the world these two Americans and Korda remain year after year at the top, while hundreds of canny, hard-headed men, always watching the pence, go broke and disappear.

To some this seems unnatural, a defiance of the moral law, a slap in the face of the city. Korda just smiles—like most cynics, he is a tolerant, kindly man: for a real persecuting fanatic you have to look to idealists—and observes that it all depends on what you mean by extravagance. "A film that costs £400,000, and earns £600,000, is the sort of extravagance I like. A film that costs £100,000 and loses £90,000—that is an economy I cannot afford".

Of course when he does have a flop—a *Bonnie Prince Charlie* (originally conceived and started by that cautious showman, Ted Black), or a *Knight Without Armour*,—



that is also on the grand scale. On such occasions we critics are inclined to be a little supercilious. If only somebody had listened to us. . . . Well, as it happens, I tried more than once to talk Ted Black out of *Bonnie Prince Charlie*, partly because Charles Edward, though doubtless an agreeable playboy and accomplished charmer, never did anything except drag a lot of brave men to death, and partly because the story inevitably ends in anti-climax—it's the wrong shape. I must admit, though, that I should have been all for *Mine Own Executioner*, and a trifle doubtful about *The Third Man*, and we all know how they panned out.

Yes, Korda has courage: he showed that at an early age. His father died when he was 14, and Alex found himself the principal support of his mother and two younger brothers, Zoltan and Vincent. He became a junior teacher and, while still in his 'teens, a reporter on a newspaper in Budapest. He also found time to attend the University there. Obviously he had a flair for journalism—you might deduce this from his ability nowadays to dictate a well-reasoned article without a pause or a repetition—for he became a special staff writer and a night editor.

What really fascinated him, though, was a more adventurous and creative job; at 22 he took the plunge. He hired a tumbledown shed on the outskirts of Budapest, and produced, directed, photographed and cut a film written by himself. That was learning the hard way, but he probably owes much of his technical accomplishment to that early experience. More immediately important was an engagement to direct for Sascha Films in Vienna. *The Prince and the Pauper* was a hit, and Alex was on his way. In Berlin he married Maria Korda and directed her in several films, the best of which was *A Modern DuBarry*. Moving on again, he had a fling at Hollywood. Does anyone now remember *In the Night Watch*, or *The Woman from Monte Carlo*, or *The Princess and the Plumber*? *The Private Life of Helen of Troy*, made for First National, was more successful, but Korda's approach and humour, cynical and mocking about such sacred subjects as Love and Marriage, was much too adult and cosmopolitan for American fans of the period. His contract was not renewed, his marriage



was dissolved and with his young son, Peter, and about 20 dollars in his pocket, he left Hollywood, as he thought, for good.

Flat broke in Paris, he had a phone call from Paramount: would he direct European versions? He came to Elstree, and made *Service for Ladies*, and even if the public didn't quite realise what had happened, critics did. The British screen, devoted for the most part to juvenilia, had come of age. With the help of George Grossmith and one or two others, Korda raised enough capital to found London Film Productions. Characteristically, he took offices in Grosvenor Street. Later, during his uneasy alliance with M.G.M., he occupied a spacious town house in Belgrave Square. His last move was to 143-6, Piccadilly, an aristocratic row that included the remains (now his private cinema) of the house once occupied by the King and Queen. Snobbery, as his enemies have suggested? Alex would shrug indifferently at the charge. Apart altogether from the fact that he paid far less for these charming Georgian houses than he would have for a Wardour Street warren, Alex feels (don't we all?) that he can do better work in attractive surroundings. "Why, dear fellow, why should one work in a dump?"

Characteristically again, Korda not only staked everything on one big film, but refused to sweeten the somewhat acid cynicism that had already failed in Hollywood. Worse, he dared to present a foreigner's unflattering view of English monarchy. There were moments when it looked as if money would run out again, but by borrowing where he could and chucking away Vincent's big Abbey set, he finished *Henry VIII* somehow. The world premiere in Paris began at 11.20. To catch the edition I had to rush out at the end of the third reel to telephone my half-column notice impromptu—that was indeed a bad quarter of an hour. But I had seen enough to convince me that *Henry VIII* marked a new highwater mark in the ebb and flood of the British screen.

The rest is history. With the handsome backing of the Prudential, Korda built the Denham studios and labs; and in 1935 he became a producer-owner of United Artists, on equal terms with Chaplin, Fairbanks, Goldwyn and Mary Pickford. In three years the penniless Hungarian had come a long way.

True to his principle that the best is good enough, Korda engaged famous writers, directors and musicians like Wells, Zuckmayer, René Clair, Feyder, Julien Duvivier, Robert Flaherty and Bliss. The stars—Laughton, Donat, Massey, Sabu, Richardson, Merle Oberon, Binnie Barnes, Deborah Kerr,—he was mostly content to make. Of the films he turned out during this period—*The Shape of Things to Come*, *The Ghost Goes West*, *Rembrandt*, *Catherine the Great*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *The Four Feathers*, *Elephant Boy*, *The Thief of Bagdad* and *Sanders of the River* among them—not all were good, but all of them had at least a professional finish then rare in a country where most films suggested the work of ungifted amateurs. Some of these things are now playing to big business in Europe and the East; even *Rembrandt*, which died the death at the box office, seemed oddly impressive at a recent showing.

Competing with Hollywood on unequal marketing terms, Korda was unable to build reserves. The war brought on a crash, he lost control of Denham, and for the next two or three years he worked mainly in Hollywood at the request of the British Government, then anxious



Korda on location at Hyde Park Corner, during "*An Ideal Husband*"

that the world screen shouldn't be wholly abandoned to neutrals and enemies. At a time when some Britons were trying to get themselves and their money out of the country, Korda faithfully sent back the earnings of *Lady Hamilton* and *Lydia*—over a million dollars. He was often back himself, once to make *The Lion Has Wings*; in fact during the years when most people hardly relished trans-Atlantic flights he was practically commuting. It was partly for this war-time service that he was knighted in 1942.

The alliance with M.G.M. (1943-5) produced *Perfect Strangers*, a pleasant comedy but unimportant. Korda was far too much of an individualist to be happy in double harness, and by the end of the war he had bought back his old productions, re-issued them with astonishing success, and started London Films on what was to be, after an inauspicious start, a fruitful new life. *An Ideal Husband* was a polished translation of that second-rate work; *Anna Karenina* and *Bonnie Prince Charlie* were resounding flops; so, most regrettably, was *Mine Own Executioner*. But *The Fallen Idol*, *The Third Man*, *Seven Days to Noon* and *State Secret* were brilliant entertainment that people everywhere could appreciate.

Where does he go from here? Immersed in production and finance, he has directed nothing since *An Ideal Husband*, though he may make *The Sleeping Beauty* himself. Will he also tire of production? I fancy that, as he entertains friends of a wider world in his penthouse flat, with its charming antique furniture, its Monet and Guardi, its beautifully bound Voltaire and Horace, its slight suggestion of a gold-and-ivory tower, Alex is sometimes tempted to chuck films altogether. But what then? Sit around doing nothing? Impossible! Tour the Continent, cruise in his yacht? What would be the point, if he had nothing to get away from? What he would really like, I think, is to try something quite different—diplomacy, perhaps. That is one dream a naturalised Briton is unlikely to realise. But you have only to hear him conducting a press conference in five languages to know that he would make a better ambassador than most.



## THE STUDIO:

# Sir MICHAEL BALCON and EALING

Francis Koval

THOSE SIXTEEN OR seventeen people sitting at the huge round table over their cups of tea did not really fit into the usual conception of a "directors' conference" at all. There were no big cigars and no self-important speeches, no condescension on the part of the big boss and no hypocritical lip-service from the men employed by him. The atmosphere was friendly and informal.

And yet, almost all the producers, directors and script-writers of Ealing Studios were gathered round that table in one of the periodically held studio conferences in which views are exchanged in all frankness, and future plans discussed without the air of secrecy so common in many studios, particularly when different production teams are at work at the same time.

Sir Michael Balcon conducted the discussion almost paternally, without any formality; and even the presence of a journalist did not seem to impose any restraint on the free flow of ideas or on the raising of delicate queries. That same spirit of co-operation that I had observed more than once on the floor of Ealing Studios I found again among all those people who in the end bear direct responsibility for the activity on those busy stages and for the finished product: the Ealing film, the "film that begs to differ".

This was the slogan coined in 1939 for *There ain't no Justice*, the first major production undertaken by Michael Balcon at Ealing. It introduced the novel style of factual screen reporting that was later to become the hall-mark of most Ealing pictures. It incidentally also introduced Jimmy Hanley in his first grown-up part, and among the



Sir Michael Balcon (centre) at an Ealing conference: on his left, Charles Crichton (director), Margaret Harper-Nelson (casting director), on his right, Hal Mason (production supervisor), and his secretary. Below, left to right: Major Reginald Baker (managing director), Michael Relph (producer), Robert Hamer (director), Sidney Cole (producer).

small-part players—an unknown young man named Michael Wilding.

Space permitting, it would be fascinating to make a detailed study of all the Ealing films—66 in all—produced since Michael Balcon took over in 1938. A certain line of steady if not always consciously pursued development would probably emerge; and—as a marginal effect—there would also emerge a few names of actors and directors who are famous now, but were unknown at the time.

Margaret Lockwood, of course, playing a supporting part in *Lorna Doone*, passed through Ealing before Michael Balcon's time, in the era of Basil Dean's management. So did Vivien Leigh in *Look Up and Laugh*, one of the highly successful Gracie Fields pictures. George Formby was at that time one of the studio's most important discoveries, and among his leading ladies he counted Googie Withers, Pat Kirkwood and Phyllis Calvert, all of them unknown then. Many of these comedies served as an excellent object lesson to the young director Anthony Kimmins, who made use of a very gifted young cameraman named Ronald Neame. Stewart Granger got his chance in the inconspicuous part of a naval officer in Pen Tennyson's *Convoy*. In one of the Will Hay comedies John Mills had a part which called for out-and-out slapstick scenes, in another the name of Peter Ustinov emerged among the supporting players. In 1941 Thorold Dickinson attracted attention directing the War Office sponsored *Next of Kin*, Cavalcanti and Charles Frend made a success with *The Foreman went to France*, and a year later Cavalcanti's colleague and pupil Harry Watt was acclaimed for *Nine Men*. As for the "old brigade"—consisting of directors like Basil Dearden, Robert Hamer, Charles Frend, Charles Crichton—they had all started in Ealing right at the bottom.

Seeing them all united at that conference table I could not at moments prevent my mind from wandering, leaving behind the topics discussed and registering almost subconsciously the titles of their pictures that had once fascinated, amused or stirred me.





From the realistic punch derived from an almost documentary approach in *San Demetrio*, *London*, *The Overlanders*, or *Scott of the Antarctic*, to fantasy at its best in *Dead of Night*: from the slightly romanticised subjects like *Johnny Frenchman* or *Frieda* to the unabashed freshness of *Hue and Cry*, and the variously shaded humour of *Whisky Galore*, *Passport to Pimlico* and *Kind Hearts and Coronets*—all the Ealing films (even the occasional bad ones) had something distinctive about them, a signature immediately recognisable not only by the specialised film critic, but by the public at large, here and later abroad.

To what should we attribute this unity? I put the question candidly to the film-makers gathered round the table.

After a long moment of silence, underlined by baffled expressions on the faces of those concerned, the answers begin to trickle in slowly. Obviously hardly anyone present had ever given thought to this matter.

Robert Hamer is the first one to gather his wits after the unexpected question. Trying to formulate his thoughts while he has not yet finished thinking them, he says:

"We are given complete liberty to follow our personal inclinations in choosing and elaborating our subjects. This seems to me a very important point. Apart from this the explanation may lie in the fact that we all—as it were—belong to the same film generation and consequently have the same general approach. We have all started in Ealing and have shared the same experiences for at least 5 or 10 years".

Basil Dearden, nodding his head vigorously, hastens to confirm this view and to add:

"Particularly the war years, when films became indigenous, were our formative years. And then there is one common denominator to all our efforts: the personality of the producer".

This statement made without the slightest shade of obsequiousness or flattery seems to meet with general approval, when suddenly a dissenter bodily proclaims:

"I disagree. I don't accept the premise of this discussion implying that all our pictures have the same 'signature tune'. Bob's personal style is as different from mine as Charles Frend's from Basil's. We choose different kinds of subjects and treat them in a completely different way".

Thus Charles Crichton: he doesn't find much support for his point of view, but his intervention starts the ball rolling and contributions come in from all sides:

"An idea lies at the bottom of most of our stories", says the associate producer Michael Relph, "we seldom embark on simple entertainment pictures".

"Moreover", enlarges Sir Michael, "none of us would ever suggest a subject, whatever its box-office potentialities, if it were socially objectionable or doubtful. We want to achieve box-office success, of course, but we consider it our primary task to make pictures worthy of that name. Film is to us a distributive medium in the same way as the radio. In that respect we have quite a different attitude from the American companies".

Some more relevant points are brought up. It turns out that Sir Michael's system of having everybody concerned in film-making on a pay roll has a beneficial influence on the production process. In fact, Ealing Studios don't engage people (except the actors) for the production of one or two films as often happens with other companies. Not only the technicians and the directors, but even the scriptwriters like T. E. B. Clarke and John Dighton are permanently employed. The result is that the creators of a picture are allowed to live with a picture longer: from its very inception right through to the cutting room stage and to the mixed experiences of the first night.

"This has its drawbacks too", interjects Sir Michael lightly. "As a rule the nervousness of the director before his picture is 100% ready for the press show is such that he is quite incapable of concentrating on future projects".

Somebody else mentions another factor characteristic of Ealing production: there is no secrecy. Everybody knows what each of his colleagues is doing, and the continuous exchange of ideas is stimulating. When rushes are shown, for instance, all the directors and associate producers come to see them whenever they find the time, and their criticisms are invited.

"This prevents each one of us from getting stale", comments Michael Relph.

Another reason for this is Sir Michael's contempt for establishing a formula as a basis for film-making.

"We only make pictures in which we genuinely believe", he says as we walk across the grounds, "and no director is supposed to accept a story unless his interest in the subject matter mounts to a point where it becomes firmly established faith. This to my mind is a pre-condition of a successful film. We are equally interested in artistic achievement and box-office results. On the latter depends, after all, our ability to make more pictures, more good pictures and to keep in employment all the studio people who, in the course of years, have become part and parcel of our production".

The most striking feature in Sir Michael's personality is the happy blend of business ability with creative imagination—rarely found these days in a producer. The lack of affectation and the touch of human warmth in his attitude to people make him widely popular.

From the greetings he exchanges with the workmen we meet on our way to his office it is obvious that he knows them all individually, from the chief electrician down to the clapper-boy. Upon my casual remark on this subject, he readily explains:

"I don't believe in producers who put themselves up as impresarios and try to gather around them as many well-known names as possible. I personally always look for people whose ideas coincide with mine and am always ready to give them a chance to make a name for themselves. It is true that I am very careful in picking men, and that goes as much for executives as for typists or carpenters. My greatest reward is to see a team working together happily, without jealousies or intrigues. Among the film directors and producers you have talked to there

(continued on page 58)



# THE DIRECTOR:

## CAROL REED

Basil Wright

THE YEAR 1936 was rich in films. Critical discussion and public appreciation were directed to *The Petrified Forest*, *Green Pastures*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Modern Times*, *The Story of Louis Pasteur*, *Fury*, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *La Kermesse Heroique*, *Mayerling*, *Poppy*, *Rembrandt*, *These Three*, *Top Hat*, and *A Night at the Opera*. Amid all this wealth, and emerging shyly from the crowd of undistinguished and unremembered films of the same period, was a modest British screen comedy based on a play by J. B. Priestley. This was *Laburnum Grove*, starring Cedric Hardwicke, Edmund Gwenn and Victoria Hopper. The director was a young man named Carol Reed. It was his second film and it followed quite closely on the heels of his first, another modest and inexpensive production entitled *Midshipman Easy*.

*Laburnum Grove* was well received by the critics, and one notice in particular is worth recalling to-day:

'Here at last is an English film one can unreservedly praise. Nine directors out of ten would simply have canned the play for mass consumption: Mr. Reed has made a film of it. His camera has gone behind the dialogue, has picked out far more of the suburban background than Mr. Priestley could convey in dialogue or the stage illustrate between its three walls; the hideous variegated Grove itself, the bottled beer and the cold suppers, the crowded fernery, the little stuffy bedrooms with thin walls, and the stale cigarette smoke and Bertie's half-consumed bananas. Suburbia, one of the newest suburbias, where the gravel lies lightly still over what was grass and clover, insinuates itself into every shot.'

This notice was written by the film critic of *The Spectator*; and his name was Graham Greene.

Much was to happen both to Greene and Reed before they came so closely together on *The Fallen Idol* and *The Third Man*. But it is interesting to note how Greene—probably the most perceptive and certainly the most literate film critic we have ever had in this country—was celebrating, even at that early stage, Reed's passion for detail and feeling for atmosphere; and was drawn towards his work by the recognition of that modified pessimism which he himself was already expressing in his novels. I use the term 'modified pessimism' with some misgiving; but it is perhaps a not inept description of the creative act by which an artist reaches out of the mire towards the however-dimly-seen glory of hope and faith. Just as Graham Greene found maturity as a novelist in *The Power and the Glory* (where the corruption of absolute power was vanquished by the glory which was to be found yet in the person of a soiled little renegade) so in *Odd Man Out* Carol Reed reached maturity by following a similar route—the *via dolorosa* of Johnny MacQueen.

After *Odd Man Out* it seemed almost inevitable that Reed and Greene should work together. A similarity of creative *feeling* enables them to reach instinctive mutual understanding on the matter in hand, while a dissimilarity

of character and personality produces (one may guess) that agreeable degree of conflict which, between equals, leads equally to great things. It is of course the film-director rather than the writer who is the dominant figure in *The Fallen Idol* and *The Third Man*; but Greene's position is not that favoured by so many directors who, like composers of operas, prefer their librettist to be a minor writer and not a giant of literature. Before discussing Reed's position as a mature artist, with or without Greene, it is, however, necessary to sketch the evolutionary background of his development.

Between 1936 and 1941 Reed made fourteen films, varying in importance, and none of them of the first order. With certain exceptions, these films are not especially distinguished by the profundity of feeling and experience found in the later group: but all of them provide visible evidence of the development of his film-making technique—more especially that attention to significant detail which, allied as it must be to an inner instinct for editing (montage), causes a dramatic effect by the juxtaposition of unexpected and improbable images whose sequence in terms of screen space and screen time creates an absolute logic. Indeed one may note in Carol Reed an extraordinary ability to preconceive the editing process; this is something that any good director must have in some measure, since it is the preconception of montage which determines the sense of the shooting; but in Reed it is seen, in my opinion, in an exceptionally intense and acute form.

Carol Reed's earlier films (and they averaged out at a production rate of nearly three a year) represented, apart from their own intrinsic qualities, the normal service required from a normal director by the commercial controllers of the film world. In other words Reed proved that he could deliver films which were satisfactory at the box-office. The fact that he was a director of abnormal talent gave him, as time went on, the prestige which permits experiment.

In considering Reed's work as an artist we must, therefore, take for granted that the scale of production facilities and finance available to him indicates that he does not exist in a vacuum; he is also a box-office draw. Although from some points of view I would prefer to consider at least his last three or four films as such, without even bothering to inquire whether they were seen by twelve or twelve million people, I fear the danger of indulging in sterile criticism, and of forgetting the prime element of cinema as we know it, which is its instant communicability on a world scale.

But even with such thoughts in mind one may conclude that the development of genius is a curious thing. Who can say at what precise point the artist becomes fully conscious of his powers and potentialities? Does it occur when others—perceptive critics perhaps—tell him so? Or is there a moment when he looks at his latest work and knows, without being told, that it is exceptional, regardless of its reception by the public? The latter thesis is almost certainly nearer the truth; but it would be rash



to try to guess which of Reed's films first gave him that particular satisfaction. All we can do is to examine from outside the work he has done, and try to form a reasonably objective critical judgment.

We have already seen that Reed's second film attracted attention. His third, *Talk of the Devil*, was also well received. It was a very melodramatic thriller; but it was set on Tyneside among the shipbuilding communities, and it had, in addition to the melodramatics, what Paul Dehn, reviewing it in 1937, called 'a nobility of central theme'. In fact *Talk of the Devil*, like *Laburnum Grove*, indicated Reed's preference for stories with roots in the actualities of life, on genuine locations with definite regional characteristics, and on recognizably human people, rather than on the cosmopolitan no-man's-land usually favoured by the makers of thrillers. In adopting this attitude he was no doubt influenced by the example of Hitchcock—the Hitchcock of *Blackmail* (1929), *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934) and *The Thirty-nine Steps* (1935).

Reed's first major success came a year later when he completed *Bank Holiday*—a film of greater scale and elaboration than anything he had hitherto attempted. Its story was extremely artificial. A dozen or so assorted people, most of them strangers to each other, were brought together at a crowded seaside resort, in circumstances of dramatic or comedic tension; the necessary permutations and combinations were worked out, and everyone's affairs were neatly settled by the final fade-out. The success of the film came from the way in which Reed triumphed over the artifice of the story by presenting the August Bank Holiday rush, the multitudinous beaches, and all the splendours and miseries of an overcrowded seaside holiday, with a sympathy and intimacy through which his audience could recognize not only Margaret Lockwood, John Lodge, Hugh Williams, Rene Ray and the others, but also themselves.

Seen to-day, *Bank Holiday* dates a great deal. What still remains striking is the attention to detail, the skill and understanding of the crowd scenes (notably in the rain sequences), and several touches of cynical or satirical humour (as in the sly analysis of the inner workings of the Beauty Queen racket). Apart from a wonderful performance by Wilfred Lawson as an imperturbable Sussex police sergeant, and a wickedly observed rendering by Merle Tottenham as a super-suburban girl, it is not so much the acting (or the director's influence on the actors) which impresses when we see the film to-day. Rather is it the use of detail to build up an intimacy of experience between the screen and the audience.

Reed's next four films—*No Parking* (1937), *Climbing High*, *A Girl Must Live* and *Penny Paradise* (all 1938), were of limited interest, though all indicative of his special directorial qualities. Then in 1939 he made *The Stars Look Down*, based on A. J. Cronin's novel, and starring Michael Redgrave, Margaret Lockwood and Emyln Williams. This large-scale film had a considerable box-office success; but a colder appraisal indicated that the director had not fully mastered the ideological complexities of his theme.

In *The Stars Look Down* Reed attempted, within the limits of a fictional story, to convey a truthful picture of the life of a mining community in the North of England, and at the same time to discuss and delineate the fundamental conflict between the unions and the owners.

The result was debatable. A coal owner wrote that it was 'a film that lacks almost completely any feeling of reality'. A Durham coal-miner, on the other hand, said it was 'the most successful attempt to present to the public the lot of our mining folk'. From a less specialized viewpoint some critics felt that it omitted or altered too much of the key theme of the Cronin story, thus over-simplifying the issues and at times completely missing the point. The pit disaster scenes, though extremely well done, suffered from comparison (on emotional as well as spectacular levels) with those in Pabst's *Kameradschaft*; and the ending was accused of being vague and weak. On the other hand the scene in which Fenwick pleads for the nationalization of the coal industry was splendidly directed, and much of the film had a cogent realism which, especially at that stage in British film work, was both welcome and constructive.

If Carol Reed did not completely achieve his high intention in making this film, it was because he was deliberately trying his hand at something much bigger than he had hitherto attempted; and its public success put him finally in the top class of British directors in the eyes of the film trade.

*The Stars Look Down* was followed by *Night Train to Munich*, a well-made thriller which could not really stand up to the inevitable comparison with Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*, which had appeared a year previously.

Then in 1940, after making *The Girl in the News*, Reed embarked on a screen version of H. G. Wells' *Kipps*. The suitability of Wells' work for screen adaptation seems to be a delusion which dies hard. Apart from the special case of *Things to Come*, it has proved intractable; or at any rate his adaptors have succeeded in achieving distortions, omissions and emasculations of epic dimensions. By comparison with these efforts the film of *Kipps* is a considerable success. Although in the final issue it cannot stand up to comparison with the book itself, it does reveal the director as a much more mature artist. The scenes between Kipps (magnificently played by Michael Redgrave), and Ann Pornick are infused with a much deeper emotion than is found in any of Reed's earlier films; and once again the touches of detail—for example the shot of Kipps running to the door in his nightshirt, seen through the slit in the letterbox—are unerringly placed from the point of view of film construction.

Only one more film of Reed's first period remains to be considered—*Young Mr. Pitt* (1941). Costume pieces dealing with historical personages and events are not everyone's forte; I would doubt if they are Reed's. The compression of history into tabloid form and the necessity of concentrating on highly dramatic events without having the space to place them in their proper perspective lead to a technique of visual shorthand which can be irksome. 'We need a new admiral to defeat the French'. 'Well, whom do you suggest?' 'What about this man Nelson?' (Cut to a one-eyed, one-armed man in naval uniform.)

But despite faults of this sort, *Young Mr. Pitt* was in many respects a remarkably compelling film. The problem of historical perspective was in part solved by deliberately paralleling the Pitt story with the events of 1940-1941. Pitt's belief in his country, his determination that it should be strong, his ultimate success in bringing Britain to a point where it could repel the Napoleonic threat—all



this was apt to the circumstances of 1941, and provided Reed with a clear guide to the balance and structure of his film story.

With a fine cast (Donat as Pitt, Robert Morley as Fox, and Raymond Lovell as the Prince of Wales), with an attention, as ever, to intimate detail, with an unusually mobile camera, and, above all, with a blessed lack of reverence for historical personalities, Reed made a film which was always visually compelling and often very moving; one remembers particularly the sequences of the Christmas carols and of Pitt playing with the children.

Soon after completing *Young Mr. Pitt* Carol Reed was in uniform, working for the Army Kinematograph Service on the production of Army training films.

This period of war service, from 1942 to 1945, might well have been an interlude, even an interruption, to the work of a skilled and successful director of feature films. But in Reed's case the opposite happened. The film work he was called on to do for the Army provided him with fresh springs of inspiration and a deeper understanding of human relations.

One of the training films required by A.K.S. was a film about the orientation of conscripts during their first weeks in the Army. Quite apart from the comparatively small percentage who failed completely to adjust and had to be dealt with on psychiatric levels, a very large number of recruits found the period of adjustment to army life to be not without its difficulties; they found themselves in a world of new disciplines and standards, a world in which they had to get on with people drawn from every social level.

Thus Carol Reed, with the advice and aid of the Department of Army Psychiatry, produced *The New Lot*, a medium-length film which turned out to be remarkable by any standards, let alone those of Army training requirements. That an expanded version could also be a valuable morale-builder in terms of cinema entertainment was an opinion shared by the War Office, the Ministry of Information, and Filippo Del Giudice, the producer at that time for Two Cities Films and a man with a genius for intuitive decisions of a type all too rare in the British film industry. So Reed, in collaboration with the writer Eric Ambler, who had also worked with him on *The New Lot*, went into production on *The Way Ahead*.

*The Way Ahead* had a prophetic title. It opened a new path for Reed, though it is interesting to note that the motivation of its plot bears a superficial resemblance to that of *Bank Holiday*, a group of strangers from different walks of life being thrown together by events beyond their control. The difference of course is that *Bank Holiday* was artificial and contrived, whereas *The Way Ahead* dramatized a factual and very common situation. It had something very specific to say. It was motivated by the urgencies of total war.

Whether *The Way Ahead* was intrinsically a better film than *The New Lot* is a matter on which opinions may differ. Being designed for a wider public, it had a more diffuse approach, though remarkably few concessions were made to the box-office. In any case both films have a deep significance in Reed's development as a director. With a cast of exceptionally talented actors he achieved a documentary realism in his characterizations; so much so that many people could not believe that the part of the sergeant really was played by an actor (William Hartnell, also notable as the publican in *Odd Man Out*). In this

film too, Reed, no longer embarrassed by confected artifices, finally got the measure of the continuous drama to be found in the lives of ordinary folk (who are, of course, the more extraordinary the more you study them).

A year later came *The True Glory*, a compilation film about the Allied invasion of Europe. This was a joint production by the British and United States Commands. Apart from a number of excellent maps and diagrams, it consisted entirely of actuality material shot by combat-cameramen on the spot. The task of selecting and shaping the film from the (literally) millions of feet shot from D-Day onwards was shared by Carol Reed and Garson Kanin. The result was a film of terrific emotional impact with a brilliant multi-voiced commentary and an impressive sound score by William Alwyn, who was later to be closely associated with Reed in *Odd Man Out* and *The Fallen Idol*.

But it was on his return to peace-time work that Reed, working for nearly two years with what must have been an exhausting single-mindedness and an even more exhausting intensity, achieved what still is, to my mind, his best film—*Odd Man Out* (1946-47).

Based on a novel by F. L. Green, *Odd Man Out* bears a superficial resemblance to John Ford's fine film *The Informer*. Both stories are concerned with the hunting down of a criminal on the run. But in *The Informer* the entire film was personalized in the character of the hunted man, whereas in *Odd Man Out* something far deeper is achieved; for the motivation of the man-hunt is used as a means of searching out the inner heart of society itself.

The opening of the film at first resembles that of any thriller. A day-light robbery, though carefully planned, ends in panic and murder. But these opening sequences actually contain elements which distinguish the film from the ordinary thriller. The murderer, Johnny MacQueen, is not just a cheap gangster. The money grabbed at revolver point is needed for the funds of 'the Party.' Note, though, that neither the name nor the aim of 'the Party' is ever clarified. The question is in fact irrelevant. All we are concerned with is Johnny's entanglement in loyalties to a set of ideas which are in opposition to the existing power-structure of the society in which he lives. That established, we observe the reactions of the many different people he meets as he stumbles, wounded and delirious, across the dark enmity of the great city. And the reactions are complex, because the wounded Johnny is more than a murderer; he is a question-mark to society. Murder or no murder, these people feel the pressure of a more urgent, more disturbing issue; faced with the simple job of handing him over to the police, they evade or compromise, some for one reason, some for another.

A theme of this size needs a big canvas, and Reed did not hesitate to use it. The changes of scene are multitudinous; so too are the characters—some seen only for a moment, but unforgettably, and with complete relevance not only to the mood but also to the story structure. The most striking example perhaps is the little girl with the single roller-skate, whose unwitting and unwilling intervention provides the mainspring for a vital part of the plot-mechanism, and is also, even in isolation, heartrendingly lovely.

Reed also observes the unities. The film starts at noon, ends at midnight. The town clock, high on its tower, strikes every hour; and, in far more shots than can be



absorbed during a single viewing of the film, looms sometimes near, sometimes far, with its inexorably moving hands. A further point, involving what might well have been an irritating flight of symbolism had it not been used with such dramaturgic skill, is that within the twelve hours the weather changes from fair to rain, from rain to thick, driving snow.

*Odd Man Out* has that symmetry, that tautness of construction, that wholeness, which one associates with poetic drama. It is, within the strictest terms of film-aesthetic, a real work of art. There are two short sequences which do not come off, but even in these we note that the failure is due not to a mistake in idea, but to a technical failure on Reed's part. His intentions are aesthetically correct, but they have not been adequately translated to the screen; and it is perhaps no chance that both these sequences depend on elaborate trick-effects which fail because we are made more conscious of the trickery than of the purpose for which it is being used.

When Johnny sees the faces of friends and foes in the bubbles of spilt beer on the table in the public house, the technique used, clever though it is, calls too much attention to itself. The faces are so obviously inserted into the bubbles that we become dispassionate observers of an effect rather than being made to participate in Johnny's delirium. Exactly the same thing happens when the paintings slide off the walls and range themselves into a nightmare jury, as Johnny sits on the model's dais in the studio of the drunken artist who seeks to capture on canvas 'the look in a dying man's eyes'.

There remain two films to be discussed—*The Fallen Idol* (1948) and *The Third Man* (1949). Both are written by Graham Greene—the former adapted from an existing short story, the latter specially written for the screen. If I say that neither has the aesthetic completeness of *Odd Man Out*, I do not mean to imply that they are in any sense minor works. On the contrary, they are far ahead of most contemporary film making, and, like *Odd Man Out*, they both contain much more than the outward plot would lead one to expect. *The Fallen Idol* tells how a small boy sees by chance what seems to be a murder, and how, thinking the murderer to be the butler he hero-worships, he uses every subterfuge he can to avoid causing the butler's arrest; ironically enough, the evidence he withholds turns out to be the essential information needed to establish the butler's innocence. Such, briefly, is the plot. But the essence of the film resides in the way it reveals the progressive disillusionments of childhood shown, it is true, in highly dramatic form. It all depends on one small boy, and his sad discovery of the fallibility of the infallible; and as a directorial job Reed's handling of young Bobby Henrey is a *tour de force*.

*The Fallen Idol* is full of remarkable film effects, of which the most memorable is that electrifying moment when the small boy, a tiny figure seen from high up, runs out into the rain-soaked street in his pyjamas; while, on the sound track, there surges up an overwhelming orchestral effect by William Alwyn.

As with *The Fallen Idol*, so in *The Third Man* the story structure is deceptive—a Hitchcock-type thriller, one would think, set in post-war Vienna. A young American arrives in the city only to find that the friend he has come to meet has been killed in a street accident. He soon realizes that it was not accident, but murder. Then, as

he tries to find out the real facts, he discovers that his friend is not only still alive, but a murderer himself; in the end, after a melodramatic chase through the sewers (the weakest part of the film) he has to shoot him.

But once again there is a further quality beyond the bare story outline; an alarming overtone. The murder in question is not just gangster melodrama. It involves tampering with the penicillin supplies to children's hospitals, with results which, in a sequence made all the more horrible by the reticence of its presentation, we seek vainly to forget. The main characters are more than life-size; and if the villain (Orson Welles) is a monster, so too, in a disturbing way, is the control officer who tracks him down (Trevor Howard's playing of this part was undoubtedly the best screen performance of 1949). There is, too, a horrible and gnome-like small boy, who, in his unpleasant little way, starts a man-hunt after the wrong man—a complete reversal, this, of the incident of the small girl in *Odd Man Out*.

But in spite of these many merits (including some gloriously comic sequences featuring a British 'cultural officer'), in spite of the fact that (like his two previous films) *The Third Man* grows in the mind after you have seen it so your fullest enjoyment is reached several days later, in spite of a sureness of direction which surpasses even that of *Odd Man Out*, *The Third Man* very definitely raises the question of Reed's future development.

I referred earlier to Reed's 'modified pessimism'. I had partly in mind the fact that in his last two films (and there were hints, too, in *Odd Man Out*) one detects a tendency to concentrate on abnormal, or, if you like, supernormal persons. The villain in *The Third Man* is certainly abnormal; indeed he should be clearly recognizable as the embodiment of absolute evil. But this embodiment is not finally recognized because, at the big moment when the two 'friends' have their first showdown (on the slowly revolving Big Wheel of an almost deserted fair) the issue in question is not squarely faced. We expect a revelation, but are put off with some clever writing and direction. One may note, too, that even the small boy in *The Fallen Idol* is somewhat outside the normal; after all, only a few children are completely bilingual and live in an Embassy.

I hesitate however to push these criticisms too far; indeed, a recollection of *The Way Ahead* may do much to cancel them. Nor must one forget the comedy passages in Reed's last two films, carried out with an exquisite sense of timing and angle. Finally, the fact remains that Reed is not only the first really great director Britain has yet produced, but also one of the best directors anywhere in the world to-day.

Speaking purely personally, I would like to see Reed turn to Henry James for one of his future films; to *The Princess Casamassima* perhaps. But whatever he does we can be sure that with all the mechanism of cinema at his finger-tips, with an instinct for montage rare at any time and in anyone, with a sense of drama and a sense of comedy, and with not a little of the poet in him, Reed, now in his maturity, may be counted on for something exciting and important; provided, that is, he continues to obtain the necessary financial backing (and he is by no means an inexpensive director), and provided that his unique film sense is not interfered with by other and lesser men.



# THE SCREENWRITER:

## T. E. B. CLARKE

### John Morley

THE BORN STORY-TELLER is as rare to-day as the natural screenwriter. T. E. B. Clarke manages to combine both talents. Most of the better known scriptwriters in Britain have come to the cinema from the theatre, as with Terence Rattigan, or the novel, as with Graham Greene and Eric Ambler. T. E. B. Clarke, who is now forty-three, went into journalism after he left Cambridge: when he began to write for films, at Ealing Studios—where he has been under contract for some time now—he did not at once reveal his most personal qualities. He worked on the scripts of *Champagne Charlie*, *For Those in Peril*, *Johnny Frenchman* and *Dead of Night* before he wrote the original story and screenplay of *Hue and Cry*, which immediately made his name, containing as it did the humour, fantasy and fresh invention that has characterised most of his recent work. No British scriptwriter has in the last four years produced new ideas for the screen as original as those of *Hue and Cry*, *Passport to Pimlico*, *The Magnet* and *The Lavender Hill Mob*.

Clarke attributes this inventiveness to a mixture of observation, personal experience and chance. For instance: after Charles Crichton had made *Painted Boats*, he wanted to make another film with one of the boy actors in it, Harry Fowler, as a central character. Henry Cornelius, then a producer at Ealing, mentioned to Clarke an idea that had occurred to him for the climax of a film, in which London was in effect taken over by scores of boys for a few hours. The working out of a story building up to this climax, with Harry Fowler as the leader of a gang of Cockney boys, finally produced *Hue and Cry*. The lively authenticity of the Cockney dialogue can be attributed to the fact that Clarke worked in the London police force during the war and learned how to deal with children in emergencies, watched them playing in the streets and helping to extinguish incendiary bombs.

*Hue and Cry* became an adventure seen through the eyes of children: and in *The Magnet* T. E. B. Clarke returned to this form of story-telling, this time combining two entirely separate anecdotes. One was told him by his father, and concerned a child during the first world war, the second actually happened to his seven year-old son. The inspiration for *Passport to Pimlico* arrived also from two distinct sources: one factor was that Henry Cornelius wanted to make a film about old and peculiar laws that had never been repealed, and a man who kept on unwittingly breaking them: the other was that Clarke remembered reading during the war about a special Canadian law being introduced to decree that the

maternity room in which Princess Juliana gave birth to her baby should be regarded as Dutch soil, thus making the baby a legal heir to the throne by Dutch law. Clarke adapted Cornelius' notion and the newspaper item to the brilliant conception of a small area of London having been ceded hundreds of years ago to Burgundy, and its citizens suddenly discovering the fact and finding themselves free of the laws and restrictions of present-day England. And Clarke's latest script, *The Lavender Hill Mob*, about a mild, middle-aged cashier at the Bank of England who finds a way of stealing gold bullion and smuggling it to France disguised as those little gold-painted lead models of the Eiffel Tower, started off as a serious melodrama on which he was going to collaborate with another writer. It is characteristic that he should have proceeded to another idea by suddenly seeing the humorous and fantastic side of what started as a straightforward situation.

Another of Clarke's recent successes was *The Blue Lamp*, to obtain background material for which he travelled around London in a police car. It has fewer of the immediately recognisable characteristics of its writer, but in its varied choice of locale—the hold-up in the little suburban cinema, the chase in the White City stadium, as well as a picturesque assortment of minor characters—it reflects one of his most constant preoccupations. A believer in the necessity of conceiving original stories for the screen, and not adapting them from novels or plays, Clarke considers that novelty and interest must arise from a situation that will be visually arresting: it is no good trying to dress up lack of inspiration with dialogue. Hence the importance of settings, of motivations of character and so of plot, to create and introduce new backgrounds.

In a wider sense the particular flavour of Clarke's stories reflects his temperament. Genial, tolerant, full of curiosity about all kinds of human beings, he is nearly always stumbling upon an odd, fantastic story in a newspaper or magazine, and telling it with a relish that makes an immediate impact. The type of subject that appeals to him is not one of psychological complexity, and, as he conceives his characters in simple, direct terms, he is free to develop incidents that twist themselves into flights of fancy without being held back by the need for serious explanations. Thus a group of London kids discover that the serial in their "shocker" is being used as a code by a gang of thieves, a group of Londoners wake up to find themselves part of Burgundy, a mousy little cashier manages to smuggle bullion from the Bank of England, and a child, having tricked another child into giving him his magnet and seized with a guilt-complex afterwards, gladly gives it as a contribution towards the cost of an iron lung and is sentimentalised by adults into a young hero: the element of the extraordinary is injected into the ordinary by means that appear quite plausible and straightforward. The result is an individual style of screen comedy that has attracted the collaboration of three different directors at Ealing—Charles Crichton, Henry Cornelius (who has now formed his own company), and Charles Frend—and has now come full circle. It began with Crichton on *Hue and Cry*, and it is Crichton who has directed T. E. B. Clarke's latest, *The Lavender Hill Mob*.



# THE CAMERAMAN:

## JACK CARDIFF

Mark Edwards

AT THE AGE OF 36 Jack Cardiff has earned a special place in British cinematography—in world cinematography, for that matter, since in the highly competitive field of Technicolor he has been acknowledged here and in America as its leading practitioner. Cardiff is probably the only cameraman in the history of the cinema to have devoted himself so exclusively to colour—from the time of his first credit (shared with Claude Friese-Greene) as director of photography on a feature film, *The Great Mr. Handel*, in 1940, he has never worked in black-and-white.

Cardiff started in films as a child actor at the age of four: at the age of thirteen he was camera assistant on the German director Arthur Robison's silent version of *The Informer*, made at Elstree. At the age of twenty-two he had become a camera operator for London Films, and this prodigious development was heightened by the fact that he at once worked under the several notable directors imported by Korda during the 30's—including René Clair for *The Ghost Goes West*, Jacques Feyder for *Knight Without Armour*, Paul Czinner for *As You Like It*. Nor were the contacts limited to directors. At the same time Korda was employing or creating an impressive parade of stars, Dietrich, Bergner, Olivier and Donat among them.

After a year with London Films, Cardiff applied for an interview with Technicolor, which was about to open a branch in this country and start training colour operators. Cardiff has written how, although his technical knowledge at this time was, to say the least of it, slight, he eagerly and nervously described to the Technicolor experts how he had studied the colour and lighting in pictures by Rembrandt, Vermeer, de Hoogh, and felt they contained important lessons for cinematography—"I told them I was obviously not the man they were looking for; scientifically I was a total loss"—and how, after intense questioning on the subject, he was taken on. A few months later he was working as colour operator on *Wings of the Morning*, Korda's and Britain's first Technicolor picture, at the recently opened Denham Studios.

After *Wings of the Morning*, Technicolor made Cardiff

a staff cameraman, and he was assigned to the *World Window* series of travelogues. In the years that followed he was able to fulfil two ambitions simultaneously—personal research in colour photography, and the enjoyment of travel. Since his teens he had wanted to go abroad, and *World Window* took him to Europe, the Middle East, and India. And in France and Italy he had the opportunity again to study pictures in art museums and galleries, and enrich his own technique from them.

Cardiff's more recent career is, of course, well known. It has ranged from the three films he photographed for Powell and Pressburger—*A Matter of Life and Death*, *Black Narcissus*, and *The Red Shoes*, the second of which earned him an Oscar—to the impressive location achievements of Pat Jackson's *Western Approaches*. The work with Powell and Pressburger was particularly rewarding for him, since each film gave him a chance to flavour his effects with the opulent and exotic, a taste that is reflected throughout his career. His previous experience in India no doubt greatly contributed to the sumptuously authentic studio re-creation of its colours in *Black Narcissus*. Cardiff has also worked with Hitchcock on *Under Capricorn*, recorded Orson Welles in colour in *The Black Rose*, and crowned his talent for richly beautiful effects in *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman*. One of his less known successes, which contains nevertheless some of his best and most experimental work, was the documentary, *Steel*. Now he is photographing the Festival film on the life of Friese-Greene, *The Magic Box*.

To-day, after having been in contact with the cinema for 32 out of his 36 years, Cardiff has lost none of the eagerness, the willingness to explore and experiment, that made him Britain's first colour operator fifteen years ago and makes him the internationally recognised expert today. A few months ago he gave an interview to the *Daily Express* on the subject of lighting female stars, advising how to photograph Ingrid Bergman, Dietrich, Jean Simmons, Ava Gardner, Deborah Kerr and others to their best advantage. Photographing women is one of his special gifts—no one has decorated Ava Gardner as effectively as he did in *Pandora*, and he would probably have a wonderful time with Dietrich. In this his study of the portraits of Old Masters shows most directly. Without diminishing the whole of his achievement, it might well be said that Cardiff will particularly be remembered for something which fascinates him personally in the famous portraits he has studied: bestowing immortality on the faces of women by the creation of light and colour.

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(J. ARTHUR RANK, continued from page 5)

best, determined to use the cinema for useful and informative purposes, even in the certainty that, at first, the new ventures would lose money.

At the moment, economy seems to be achieving results, but at a cost. Last September Rank announced that he would encourage the independent producer by making studio facilities available, and by providing distribution guarantees. But this in itself is an admission of the risks of production; the improved situation of the organisation comes not from the production of pictures which make more money, but from a reduction in the number of pictures made, and so in the risks taken.

The film industry has gone a long way since *The Turn of the Tide* introduced Rank to the business. He himself has had to operate in a spotlight of publicity he would never have sought; he has been called the rescuer of the industry from the Americans, and the man who sold it to the Americans; he has been told that he is a machiavellian monopolist, and that only through integration can the industry be strong. He has continued on his own way, usually cheerful and confident, always imperturbable; he has had the courage of his convictions and has admitted his mistakes; he has been in the industry less than twenty years; he is a force to be reckoned with in its future.



## JACK HARRIS

Karel Reisz

Among British editors, Jack Harris is to-day the undisputed master craftsman. Thirty years of enthusiasm and imaginatively applied hard work have brought him this place of honour. Like many other technicians dedicated to their craft, he came to the industry almost by accident: he joined the Gaumont Studios in Shepherd's Bush in 1921 as an office boy and spent the next seven years in typing and general office work, washing dishes, acting as floor secretary (continuity boy), taking a largish comic part in *The Lights of London* (for which he got extra's pay and was glad to have it), and finally finished up as assistant director to Maurice Elvey and Victor Saville. With the advent of sound, he went over to the newly converted Twickenham Studios as a fully fledged assistant director. The routine of the time was for the director to do his own cutting and it was not till the complications of sound production made this unpractical that Harris transferred his attention full time to the cutting room. Several years of quickies followed: one, he recalls, which shall remain nameless, was shot in nine days and contained a reel consisting of precisely four shots. (It was patched together by the editing department in six hours and put away in a safe for three days so that the front office should not suspect how quickly the work had been done.) An idea of the speed of production of the time can be gained from the fact that *The Wandering Jew* (made in 1933 and starring Conrad Veidt) gave Jack Harris his fiftieth cutting credit. When the Twickenham Studios went out of business, he freelanced for a while and then joined British National: he cut anything from Sandy Powell pictures to *Let the People Sing* (Priestley), from Flanagan and Allen films to *Pastor Hall*.

This long apprenticeship—for in the light of his subsequent work it can be regarded as such—is worth recalling, for Jack Harris is the first to acknowledge the importance of this period of learning to his present skill. There followed the plum job which he had now earned: David Lean, who after their long period of work together has the highest respect for Harris' judgment, offered him a contract with Cineguild. Harris worked in this capacity on *This Happy Breed* (the film he has most enjoyed cutting to date), *Blithe Spirit*, *Brief Encounter* (his favourite among the films he has worked on), *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*. He speaks in glowing terms of his work with David Lean—a director, he says, who does more than pay lip-service to the importance of editing. After *Oliver Twist* Harris became supervising editor for Pinewood Studios: although he does not say so, it is evident from the way he describes this time, that the job was not practical enough for him and kept him too far away from a moviola. He edited at this time *Once A Jolly Swagman*—which contains some of the most brilliantly edited action sequences of any British film—and finally resigned from Pinewood to cut *Golden Salamander*. He has since worked on *Captain Hornblower*, *R.N.*

In 1945 J. Arthur Rank sent Harris to America for four

months, partly to investigate the allegations from distributors that British films were too slow, partly to prepare foreign versions. He speaks with some admiration of the Hollywood production system and claims that their most obvious advantage over British methods is the invariable pre-viewing of comedies before the final cut is prepared. About the Hollywood practice of taking the film away from the director immediately it comes off the floor, Harris is characteristically level-headed. For the average commercial film, he says, it is much better for the producer—provided he knows his job—to cut the film: in this way an action film is cut as an action film and no nonsense; a comedy is cut for a couple of gags a minute. For the genuinely creative director, on the other hand, Harris considers the Hollywood practice suicide. He believes that the best cut sequences and the most striking cutting effects are achieved either by accident or by the most rigorous planning from the script stage—of the latter variety he can quote a great many examples from the Lean films.

Harris is a man of independent tastes, completely unaffected by fashionable views or mere technical brilliance. He claims that Sam Wood is one of his favourite directors, John Ford the one who gives him the greatest number of disappointments: (he sees all Ford films but admits that it has recently become difficult to keep this up). He has the greatest admiration for the three productions of the Swiss Lazar Wechsler—*The Last Chance*, *Marie Louise* and *The Search*. At the same time he confesses that the Andy Hardy comedies are among his most enjoyed memories of the cinema.

The films that have most influenced his work are Frank Capra's early comedies, for the utter ruthlessness of Capra's editing, though he says that he still finds comedies the most exacting to cut. The one film which has most affected his work is *The Front Page*, and he considers Milestone to be one of the great men of the cinema: "*All Quiet on the Western Front* should be shown in every cinema on every Armistice Day from now till doomsday".

While speaking to Jack Harris about film-making, one is aware of two things. First, the knowledge gathered in thirty years of production has left him with a complete mastery of his craft. (One of his few boasts is the story of the director who asked him to re-cut a sequence and reduce it by half its length: Harris went to work completely re-shaping it and was commended for its speed when in fact he had added thirty feet to the original length.) Secondly, and this is more important because rarer: he is unimpressed by technical accomplishment alone: the technician with nothing to say is, to him, the man most to avoid.

Plans for the future? He admits he would like to direct, provided he gets a subject in which he feels confident. The proviso is important, for he claims, wisely, that a first rate editor is a better thing to be than a second rate director. Meanwhile, the far-sighted producer who offers him a good subject is unlikely to be disappointed.



ACTOR:

# Sir LAURENCE OLIVIER

James Morgan

ACTOR, DIRECTOR, PRODUCER, impresario—in both the cinema and the theatre Sir Laurence Olivier occupies to-day a unique position, arrived at by adventurousness and independence, and sustained by the same means. A brief summary of his work in both fields since the war gives the best indication of his tastes and methods. In the cinema he has directed and played the lead in two Shakespeare films, *Henry V* and *Hamlet*, and most recently went to Hollywood for William Wyler's *Carrie*, which we have not yet seen; a few weeks ago he completed a guest appearance, in the company of many other stars, in the Festival film *The Magic Box*. In the theatre he has played Lear, Richard III, Oedipus, Hotspur, Astrov in *Uncle Vanya*, at the Old Vic (to re-establish which, with Sir Ralph Richardson, he was released from the Fleet Air Arm in 1945), he has brought to London such new plays as *The Skin of Our Teeth*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Venus Observed*, *Top of the Ladder*, he has toured Australia and New Zealand with his wife, Vivien Leigh, in a special Old Vic company, he has sponsored the London production of Menotti's music drama *The Consul*, and he is now presenting and appearing in, with Vivien Leigh, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Caesar and Cleopatra* at the St. James's Theatre for the Festival of Britain.

Although in the last three years the theatre has taken up most of the time, the cinema has an equal claim on Olivier, and he would no doubt be the last to deny that the popularity gained by his success in films was an immense practical help in building an audience for his bold theatre policy. This popularity is the result of appearances in films over the last twenty years, beginning in 1930 with *The Temporary Widow*, which was made in Germany.

Olivier first went to Hollywood in 1931 as an actor, and remained there three years. He made no outstanding films, but appeared with Gloria Swanson in *Perfect Understanding* (which, Samuel Goldwyn has said,



Top: Laurence Olivier with Gloria Swanson in "Perfect Understanding".

Centre: Laurence Olivier with Vivien Leigh in Korda's production of "Fire Over England".

Right: Heathcliffe and Cathy: Olivier and Merle Oberon in "Wuthering Heights".





Laurence Olivier as Hamlet.

Olivier told him was the worst film he had ever seen), and—a tribute to the blindness of producers—was considered for the lead opposite Garbo in *Queen Christina* but rejected in favour of John Gilbert. On his return to England, he was put under contract by the astute Sir Alexander Korda, and quickly developed—in *Fire Over England* (which marked the film debut of Vivien Leigh), *Divorce of Lady X*, *As You Like It* and others—into one of the strongest personalities of the British screen. At the same time, he was establishing himself as a stage actor at the Old Vic. He returned to Hollywood, though, for his most outstanding film part before the war—Heathcliff in Wyler's version of *Wuthering Heights*. This brilliant performance, which captured so memorably the smouldering bitterness and passion of the character, was the most authentic element of the whole film. Its success was also a tribute to the perception of the producer, Samuel Goldwyn, and erases the slur of *Queen Christina*. Goldwyn relates how he saw Olivier on the New York stage in 1933 in *The Green Bay Tree*, and “it was this performance that was in the back of my mind when I concluded five years later that he had to be Heathcliff”.

Two other notable performances in Hollywood films followed—in Hitchcock's *Rebecca*, and as Darcy in a questionable adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. Here,

as in the Brontë film, Olivier's acting was the only contribution that could not be disputed. By this time, of course, he was an established star, and from the first he held to his independence; he made only the films he wanted to make, and since *Wuthering Heights*, in fact, has appeared in only six, excluding his own *Henry V* and *Hamlet*. For Michael Powell he played the part of a voluble French-Canadian trapper in one episode of *49th Parallel*, and for Anthony Asquith appeared—with enormous charm and a perfect accent—as a Soviet engineer visiting wartime Britain in *The Demi-Paradise*.

In 1945, with the extension of his career in the theatre as an actor-manager at the Old Vic, Olivier also branched out in the cinema. He could scarcely have chosen anything more ambitious for his first experiment in direction than *Henry V*. The degree of its success was remarkable: one can question the film on the grounds of its “purity”, one can accuse it of being a compromise between theatre and cinema—but what a compromise! It remains, certainly, the most tasteful, stylish and balanced attempt to put Shakespeare on the screen, and since there is no absolute from which to judge—the whole problem of the “perfect” Shakespeare film is unsolved, and likely to remain so—one may gratefully leave it at that.

*Henry V*, while marking a new stage in Olivier's career in the cinema, apparently also closed another in his development as an actor. It was the last romantic role he has played. In the 30's, on the stage—above all as Romeo and Mercutio—and in films he revealed a moody, flashing temperament which, combined with a slightly sullen form of handsomeness, distinguished him from every other actor in this country. No actor since has equalled it. After *Henry V*, his choice of role, and his approach, changed. On the stage he played Lear, Richard III, the middle-aged Astrov of *Uncle Vanya*, and in his film of *Hamlet*, with hair unexpectedly dyed blond, he presented an almost anti-romantic, sober, withdrawn hero. The film, itself, which he described as an “essay”, was more conscious of the demands of its medium than its predecessor, and attempted a “cinematic” style with lavish use of deep focus and a restlessly travelling camera. The style was carried through with firmness and consistency, but somehow it pointed the *impasse* of grafting cinema on to Shakespeare and gave the lie to those who, after *Henry V*, had hopefully suggested that the poet was an ideal scriptwriter.

Since *Hamlet*, Olivier has been variously reported as saying that he hopes to make another Shakespeare film, and that he would rather make a comedy. Meanwhile, he does not commit himself beyond this tentative discussion of projects, and concentrates on the theatre, in which he has established himself as a manager of rare discrimination and courage: London would have been much the poorer without *Top of the Ladder* and *The Consul*, and in his current season Olivier offers us two performances on the scale of his first season at the Old Vic in 1945. His brief guest appearance in *The Magic Box*—in which he plays a policeman—will no doubt enhance the film, but we can hope that he will soon decide to return to the British cinema, with his talented wife, at full strength. It can ill afford to be deprived of such a distinctive and energetic personality.



# THE COMPOSER:

## WILLIAM ALWYN

Ernest Lindgren

THE SUPREMACY OF British film music during the last ten years is unquestionable. It has led to millions of people unconsciously listening to good music which would otherwise have remained altogether outside their experience. If credit for this is to be assigned to any one person, it must be Muir Matheson, who brought to his work as musical director, first for Sir Alexander Korda and then for the J. Arthur Rank organisation, his great skill as a conductor and an enormous enthusiasm for the film medium and its unexplored potentialities. He was also able to enlist the services of such distinguished composers as Vaughan Williams, Sir Arthur Bliss, Alan Rawsthorne, Sir William Walton, Richard Addinsell, Sir Arnold Bax and William Alwyn.

In most professions it would not be possible to select one representative figure out of such a galaxy of brilliant names without raising disagreement, perhaps even envy. No one, however, is likely to quarrel with the choice of William Alwyn as the representative composer of British film music, least of all his colleagues. Not only was he one of the first composers of the front rank to turn to the film, but he has almost certainly written for more films than any of his colleagues, and unlike many of them who are occasionally 'borrowed', as it were, from music to grace the film, he is no less accepted as a film technician in his own right in the one world, than he is accepted as a serious musician in the other.

William Alwyn was born in Northampton in 1905, the son of a local tradesman who wanted him to enter the family business. Alwyn says there was no musical talent in his family, but there was certainly a bias towards the arts; his father had a passion for reading Shakespeare, and his younger brother was to become an artist. William himself decided, even before he had left school, that the only thing he wanted to do was music. He had already learnt to play the flute, and at the age of fourteen made his first brief contact with film music (or rather that haphazard *pot-pourri* which passed for film music in the days of the silent film) at the side of his flute teacher in a local cinema orchestra.

He says that he also began at this time to try his hand at composition, a characteristically modest understatement, for the fact is that he tried his hand to such good effect that he won two scholarships to the Royal Academy of Music, one in composition and the other in the flute. It was here that he met two people who were to have a permanent influence on his future; his professor, Sir John B. McEwen (later to become Principal of the Royal Academy of Music) whose tolerance and understanding left the young composer free to develop unhampered by the narrow restrictions of academicism but who placed before him the highest ideals of craftsmanship and poetic expression; and the fellow student who was to become his wife and share with him in the vicissitudes of an artistic life. The death of William's father cut short his studies at the Royal Academy, but not his musical career, for, after a brief venture as a schoolmaster, he returned to London, and at the age of 19 was earning a living, first by teaching the piano in the East End and then as an orchestral musician in both symphony and theatre orchestra. From his experience in the theatre under such men as Ernest Irving (now Music



Director of Ealing Studios) and Norman O'Neill he obtained much of his understanding of the practical art of dramatic music which has since proved invaluable in his approach to the film. In 1926 he returned to the Royal Academy of Music, not as a student, but as a professor of composition, an appointment which he still holds.

As teacher and composer of "pure" music his life might have continued, fruitfully but perhaps unspectacularly, if technical development and chance had not both taken a hand. The technical development was the photographic reproduction of sound on the film which made possible, not only the talking film, but a control and precision of musical accompaniment which composers of silent-film music could never hope to achieve. This raised the art of music writing for films to an entirely new level, in that the composer could become, for the first time, a partner with the scriptwriter, cameraman, director and editor in the very creation of the film, instead of a mere supernumerary.

It was in 1936 that chance entered, when Alwyn was attending an orchestral recording of the music for one of Alex Shaw's first documentary films. The day after the recording, Shaw telephoned Alwyn in consternation; the sound-film had been processed, and the nightmare which haunts every cameraman and recording engineer had for once become a reality; the film was utterly blank, with not a vestige of sound on it; and the musical director had left London, taking the score with him. The assistance which Alwyn gave Shaw on this occasion laid the foundation of a firm friendship which led to his being invited to write the music for Shaw's next picture, *The Future's in the Air*, and to an association with Paul Rotha, John Grierson and Basil Wright in the world of the documentary film, a new world which he entered with a pioneer's enthusiasm.



So it was that William Alwyn, professor and fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, became, in the free and easy nomenclature of the film studios, plain Bill Alwyn, who wrote film music as other men wrote scripts or operated the camera, or directed pictures; for the success of his first film score led to many more. The reference books list nearly forty documentary titles between 1936 and 1946, including *Fires Were Started*, *Welcome to Britain*, *To-day and To-morrow*, and *The Proud City*. He also wrote the music for several notable feature documentaries, including *Desert Victory*, *The True Glory*, *World of Plenty*, *Land of Promise* and *The City Speaks*.

In 1941 he composed the score for his first fiction feature, *Penn of Pennsylvania*, and this has since been followed by a host of others, including *The Way Ahead*, *On Approval*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Odd Man Out*, *The Fallen Idol*, *State Secret*, *Madeline*, *The Rocking Horse Winner*, *The Golden Salamander*, *The Mudlark* and *No Resting Place*. (The last film, incidentally, made this year, is a notable example of economy of means, being scored for harp, flute and violin only.)

Alwyn's method of working is doubtless similar to that of other film-music composers. He likes to study the script of the film before shooting, and to discuss with the director any special musical effects he may have in mind. Normally, the music is not scored and recorded until after shooting and editing have been completed, but there are exceptions. For the scenes of *Odd Man Out*, for example, in which the wounded Johnnie slouches wearily through the snow, the music was written and recorded before shooting so that James Mason could time his movements to a playback in the studio. After shooting, the composer sees the roughcut of the film, and can begin to work out musical ideas and sketch in the outline of his treatment. William Alwyn says (with perhaps mischievous exaggeration) that after his first viewing of the roughcut he frequently finds himself without a single musical idea in his head, because he is so fascinated by the visual side of the film that he wants to re-cut it entirely.

When the editing is completed, he arranges to obtain from the editor a detailed breakdown in which the smallest actions and gestures, as well as the dialogue, are indicated, with measurements of footage and time to within fractions of a second. With this aid to his memory, he can begin work on the final score. It might be thought a soulless, mechanical business to have to write within such fine and rigid time limits, but Alwyn does not find it so. On the contrary, he agrees with Vaughan Williams in welcoming it as a "splendid discipline", which is both a challenge and a stimulus to the creative impulse. In composing he visualises the action of the film so vividly that it dictates every inflection of the musical line, and becomes as it were an unheard theme in the total pattern, so that he can never hear the music again without the picture leaping immediately to his mind's eye; yet the music itself retains all the time its own musical form.

Side by side with this enormous output for the film, Alwyn has continued to teach at the Academy, and to compose "pure" music. His *Divertimento* for solo flute was performed at the International Contemporary Music Festival in New York in 1940. An Oboe Concerto was introduced at the Promenade Concerts in 1948, and in 1950 his Concerto Grosso (No.2.) for strings received its first performance under Sir Malcolm Sargent at the Albert Hall. Last year, too, his First Symphony, dedicated to Barbirolli, was played under the latter's conductorship at the Cheltenham Festival.

Until recently, doubtless as a relic from the days of the silent cinema, it was not possible for serious musicians to associate themselves with the film without endangering their professional status. One of the achievements in which Alwyn himself takes some pride is his personal success in breaking through this prejudice to obtain the highest official recognition in both worlds. In the one, for example, he has taken a leading part in organising the Composers' Guild of Great Britain,

of which he was Chairman in 1949 and 1950, remaining this year on the Guild's Council. In the other, he has this year also been elected to the Council of the British Film Academy, an exclusive body representative of top-rank film technicians. This duality is even reflected in his work for the Festival of Britain, for he was commissioned by the Arts Council to write the Festival March, and is also writing the music for *The Magic Box*, as well as an experimental piece for the binaural sound to be heard in the Telecinema.

No one who has met William Alwyn could fail to marvel that this quiet, diffident figure should be capable of such creative energy; a symphony, a Festival March and five feature films, for example, in the last year, in addition to his teaching and administrative work. Much is undoubtedly due to a regularity of working hours to which he has disciplined himself, against all the romantic traditions; half-past nine to one in the morning, three to six in the afternoon, with a short break for tea. But Alwyn himself will add to this two further explanations; the first, a capacity for such complete absorption in the task of the moment that he is temporarily oblivious to everything else: and the second, a wife with the patience and understanding to tolerate such abstraction.

It is not easy to refer in public to the happiness of a professional man's family life without the danger of being trite or sentimental. There is not the least trace of sentimentality or affectation, however, in the warm affection which binds the Alwyn household, and it is, in fact, impossible to know Alwyn fully, or to understand the sources of his strength, without knowing Olive Alwyn, and sensing the affectionate friendship which he enjoys with his two sons, Jonathan and Nicholas.

Alwyn himself has none of the flamboyance or the poses with which some public figures seek to make a quick impression. Of average height and build, he is so quiet and gentle in manner as to be almost self-effacing, and one is not surprised to learn that all his life he has had to conquer an inherent shyness. What is more surprising is that one so lacking in the aggressive self-assertiveness commonly regarded as essential to success should have achieved success without it. Alwyn himself says that everything has come to him "by waiting", but of course nothing comes to those who merely wait; rather it has come by the deeply conscientious exercise of a genuine talent without thought of the success to be reaped from it.

Despite his apparent reticence, William Alwyn is a man easy and delightful to know, and this must have contributed to his success in the film world, where the importance of team work sets a premium on good and easy personal relationships. His hobbies, too, are a clue to his character; a love of cricket, inherited as part of the family tradition, and the collecting of minor Victorian novelists, of whom he has many first editions.

There are some composers to-day who do not find themselves attracted to the film, which demands not only musical talent, but a well-developed dramatic sense and a desire to explore untrodden paths. It is the possession of these qualities which makes Alwyn, in a special manner, the representative film composer of our day. The clue to his success lies in his own words:—

"A good craftsman must have faith in his tools and to give of his best he must believe in his chosen medium. The film is a new medium for the musician and, unlike opera and ballet, it is as yet untrammelled by tradition. Perhaps this is the reason why the art of film has become for me an absorbing interest; not only does it satisfy the composer's instinct for drama but it is an adventure—an adventure into an uncharted and enchanted celluloid world. All creative art must be approached in this spirit of adventure and I believe that here in the film the composer will discover a new and fertile province in the realm of music".





A design by EDWARD CARRICK for *The Blue Lagoon* (Individual Pictures)

## DESIGN and COSTUME



A sketch by JOHN BRYAN for the opening sequence of *Oliver Twist* (Cineguild)

Right: An Ophelia costume sketched by ROGER FURSE for Olivier's *Hamlet* (Two Cities)



(Reproduced by courtesy of British Film Art Directors and Designers Ltd.)



# *The Actress :* AN INDEPENDENT SPEAKS

Valerie Hobson

IT WAS A GREAT PLEASURE to me to be asked to contribute to this section from the point of view of an artiste taking an active part in independent production. Perhaps I was selected because, as the wife of Anthony Havelock-Allan who controls Constellation Films Limited, I have been in a slightly privileged position to observe the workings of independently produced films right from the inception to the delivery. And, needless to say, it is impossible for an actress playing a leading role in a picture not to be more completely absorbed in her work when she has been consulted on the original subject, talked to by the scriptwriters as the script takes shape and then been "in" on some of the casting conferences, etc. Perhaps this is not the lot of all actresses who play in independently produced productions but I do think they are approached earlier than is sometimes the case with films made by the large companies and so are able to get closer to the project from an early stage.

But this brings its share of worries and anxieties. Naturally the main ones are connected with finance. Most actresses are happy to adjust their living expenses so as to leave a portion of their earnings from an independent film in the pool until the film is accepted and in distribution. But this inevitably brings them closer to the Producer's financial problems and makes for greater care with the budget of the film and a greater desire to keep the picture *within* that budget. Unexpected crises always arise in film-making, but they are much more serious for the independent producer; consequently they react more on those working with him.

I remember so well how weather prevented shooting for several days on location sequences on both *The Small Voice* and *The Interrupted Journey* and with what anxiety we watched the inevitably mounting costs—everyone from Anthony Havelock-Allan down to the clapper boy felt they were personally affected.

While on the subject of finance I would like to make a reference to the National Film Finance Corporation which has done and is doing so much to assist the independent producer. Complete independence of production is, of course, impossible for anyone but an exceedingly rich man and these, unfortunately, rarely seem to want to be film producers or would make suitable ones if they did.

Surely it must be essential for a film producer to be able to choose his subject, appoint his own scriptwriters, choose his cast and engage his technicians, using his own judgment and experience. If he can then prepare his budget with integrity and be given carte blanche to make his film, within normal businesslike provisions, and apply his skill, experience, showmanship and natural good taste to his chosen subject, he will have achieved as much as any film producer can wish for in these difficult days. This is exactly the aim of the



Valerie Hobson with James Donald in "*The Small Voice*"

N.F.F.C. as I see it. And I think the films so far produced with the assistance of the Corporation well justify the confidence that has been placed in the independent producers who made them.

Finally: It is always possible for an artist to play in most happy circumstances for both a small independent producer and a big company. The big companies' methods of approach to the start of a film have frequently to be different because they are naturally governed by various considerations which do not always apply equally to the small company. I speak as an actress who has made many films for many companies and while it is true that there is perhaps more attendant anxiety connected with the making of a film for one of the independent producers, any conscientious "trouper" will feel the same sense of responsibility to play her part in pulling a picture in on or under budget and giving of his or her best at all times, whatever the size of the company and whatever the circumstances under which the film is made.



Valerie Hobson with John Howard Davies in "*The Rocking Horse Winner*"



# TEN YEARS OF BRITISH FILMS

Sir Michael Balcon

WHEN I WAS INVITED to write this survey I found myself hesitant for two reasons. The first was that I was doubtful if, in an era of so much enlightened criticism and pontification on the aesthetics of the cinema, any additional enlightenment could be provided by the subscription of the views of a mere film-maker. This doubt led me to wonder if my most valuable course would not be to explore the recent history, not of the films themselves, but of the people who made them.

This conspired to reinforce my second reason for hesitancy. It could not be generally unknown that I was in charge of a production company which had contributed a not insignificant fraction of the successful British films of the decade. Inevitably I know my colleagues who have made these films more intimately than I know people who have made others, am better acquainted with their virtues, more conscious of their faults. How, then, was I to steer a fair middle course between the Scylla of over-estimating them and the Charybdis of self-consciously doing the reverse? It is with diffidence that I publicly venture upon this difficult essay in navigation, and I hope that all mentioned, colleagues and others alike, will forgive any misjudgment or oversimplification resulting from an attempt to evaluate ten years of their personal torment within the dimensions of a thumbnail sketch.

How, then, to discuss these mysterious masochists who have decided to spend their lives acquiring ulcers in order that the critics may have something to shoot at and the public something to shop for? Should it be done according to a dictation of personal preference, or in a discreetly alphabetical order? The only answer seemed to be—at random.

Even the subterfuge of randomness cannot obscure the fact that there are two people who have to be recognised first.

The sequence of *The Way Ahead*, *Odd Man Out*, *The Fallen Idol* and *The Third Man* is so outstanding that I doubt if any professionally-trained person in this country would dream of denying to Carol Reed a unique achievement and position. Indeed, I think that on a world-wide assessment of directors he would not fall far short of this rating.

Next, tribute must be paid to Herbert Wilcox, who has an amazingly consistent record in the estimation of public taste. It is necessary only to glance at the flair for showmanship which has continued from *Sixty Glorious Years* through *The Courtneys of Curzon Street* to *Odette* to realise what a contribution he has made. For no industry involving, as ours does, large sums of money can hope to make progress without having the solid financial goodwill of the customers.

Laurence Olivier has to be regarded as a kind of Halley's Comet who periodically and beneficently flashes across our humdrum sky. He is not first and foremost a film-maker but he is probably the greatest single figure in the world theatre to-day, and his sojourns in the studios have—whatever the purists may say about purity of cinema—contributed immeasurably to the prestige of British pictures throughout the world.

Sidney Gilliat and Frank Launder are perhaps the most professional team in British films. Their long and deep understanding of each other and of public taste has resulted in a most steady and reliable output. For my money, their most important work remains their earlier—that is to say, *Millions Like Us* and *Waterloo Road*.



Laurence Olivier during the filming of "Henry V"



Carol Reed





Vivien Leigh

# SOME BRITISH FILMS



Above: "Gaslight" (British National, 1940), directed by Thorold Dickinson. Diana Wynyard, Cathleen Cordell and Anton Walbrook. Left and below: two adaptations of Shaw. "Pygmalion" (Gabriel Pascal, 1938), directed by Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard. Leslie Howard and Wendy Hiller. "Major Barbara" (Gabriel Pascal, 1941), directed by Gabriel Pascal. Wendy Hiller; Rex Harrison and Stanley Holloway in crowd.



Michael Redgrave







# AND THEIR PLAYERS



Eric Portman

Above: "49th Parallel" (Ortus, 1941), directed by Michael Powell, Laurence Olivier and Eric Portman. Also Leslie Howard, Raymond Massey, Anton Walbrook. Right: "Kipps" (20th Century, 1941), directed by Carol Reed. Michael Redgrave and Diana Wynyard. Also Phyllis Calvert, Michael Wilding. Below: "Next of Kin" (Ealing Studios, 1942), directed by Thorold Dickinson, Neva Pilbeam. Also Mervyn Johns, Stephen Murray.



Valerie Hobson







Richard Burton



Above: "The Third Man" (London Films, 1949), directed by Carol Reed from a script by Grahame Greene. Joseph Cotten, Trevor Howard. Also Orson Welles, Valli. Left: "The Blue Lamp" (Ealing Studios, 1950), directed by Basil Dearden. Jack Warner, Dirk Bogarde. Below: "The Wooden Horse" (Wessex, 1950), directed by Jack Lee, Anthony Steele. Also Leo Genn, David Tomlinson.

Elizabeth Sellars







Trevor Howard



*Above: "The Way Ahead" (Two Cities, 1944), directed by Carol Reed. William Hartnell, David Niven, James Donald, Stanley Holloway, John Laurie. Left: "The Way to the Stars" (Two Cities, 1945), directed by Anthony Asquith. Michael Redgrave, Trevor Howard and John Mills. Also Rosamund John, Renee Asherson. Below: "In which We Serve" (Two Cities, 1943), directed by Noel Coward and David Lean. John Mills. Also Noel Coward, Bernard Miles, Celia Johnson, Kay Walsh.*

Rex Harrison and Lilli Palmer







John Mills

Above: "Millions Like Us" (Gainsborough, 1943), directed by Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat. Patricia Roc and Megs Jenkins. Also Gordon Jackson, Eric Portman, Anne Crawford. Right: "Journey Together" (R.A.F. Film Unit, 1945), directed by John Boulting. Jack Watling, David Tomlinson, Richard Attenborough. Below: "Theirs is the Glory" (Gaumont British, 1947), directed by Brian Desmond Hurst. The story of Arnhem.



Anna Neagle and Michael Wildin







Alec Guinness



*Above: Noel Coward's "Blithe Spirit" (Two Cities-Cineguild, 1945), directed by David Lean. Kay Hammond, Rex Harrison and Constance Cummings. Left: "The Rake's Progress" (Individual, 1946), directed by Sidney Gilliat. David Horne, John Salew and Rex Harrison. Also Lilli Palmer, Margaret Johnston, Griffith Jones. Below: "On Approval", from the play by Frederick Lonsdale (Sydney Box, 1944), directed by Clive Brook. Clive Brook Roland Culver and Beatrice Lillie.*



Margaret Lockwood







Ralph Richardson

Above: "The Overlanders" (Ealing Studios, 1946), directed by Harry Watt. Chips Rafferty. Right: "I know where I'm going" (Archers, 1945), directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. Wendy Hiller. Also Roger Livesey, Pamela Brown, Catherine Lacey. Below: "Dead of Night" (Ealing Studios, 1945), directed by Cavalcanti, Charles Crichton, Robert Hamer and Basil Dearden. Michael Redgrave and the ventriloquist's dummy, from the sequence directed by Cavalcanti.



Ann Todd







James Donald



Above: "Henry V" (Two Cities, 1945), directed by Laurence Olivier. Also Robert Newton, Leslie Banks, Esmond Knight, Renee Asherson. Left: "An Ideal Husband", from Wilde's play (London Films, 1948), directed by Alexander Korda. Hugh Williams, Diana Wynyard and Glynis Johns. Below: "Great Expectations", (Cineguild, 1947), directed by David Lean. Valerie Hobson and John Mills. Also Bernard Miles, Martita Hunt, Jean Simmons, Alec Guinness.



Jean Kent





Joan Greenwood

Above: "Odd Man Out" (Two Cities, 1947) directed by Carol Reed. James Mason and Kathleen Ryan. Also Robert Newton, Robert Beatty, Fay Compton, William Hartnell. Right: "Hue and Cry" (Ealing Studios, 1947), directed by Charles Crichton, from a script by T. E. B. Clarke. Joan Dowling, Douglas Barr, Valerie White, Harry Fowler. Below: "Brief Encounter" (Cineguild, 1945), directed by David Lean from a play by Noel Coward. Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard.



Roger Lives







Dirk Bogarde

*"The Red Shoes" (Archers for J. Arthur Rank, 1948), directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. Moira Shearer and Massine.*



*"Men of Two Worlds" (Two Cities, 1946), directed by Thorold Dickinson. Orlando Martins. Also Eric Portman, Phyllis Calvert, Robert Adams.*



*"The Fallen Idol" (London Films, 1948), directed by Carol Reed from a script by Graham Greene. Bobby Henrey. Also Ralph Richardson, Michele Morgan, Sonia Dresdel.*



*"Scott of the Antarctic" (Ealing Studios, 1949), directed by Charles Frend. John Mills.*



Celia Johnson







Margaret Leighton

*Above: "Hamlet" (Two Cities, 1948), directed by Laurence Olivier. Laurence Olivier and Felix Aylmer. Also Jean Simmons, Eileen Herlie, Basil Sydney. Right: "Oliver Twist" (Cineguild, 1948), directed by David Lean. Alec Guinness, Robert Newton, Kay Walsh. Also John Howard Davies, Francis L. Sullivan. Below: "Queen of Spades" (An Anatole de Grunwald production for A.B.P.C.), directed by Thorold Dickinson, Anton Walbrook, Edith Evans, Yvonne Mitchell.*



Richard Todd







*"Kind Hearts and Coronets" (Ealing Studios, 1949), directed by Robert Hamer. Alec Guinness as the eight d'Ascoynes. Also Dennis Price, Valerie Hobson, Joan Greenwood.*

*"Trottie True" (Two Cities, 1950), directed by Brian Desmond Hurst. Jean Kent and Bill Owen. Also James Donald, Lana Morris.*



*Jack Warner and Kathleen Harrison*



*"Whisky Galore" (Ealing Studios, 1949), directed by Alexander MacKendrick from the novel by Compton Mackenzie. Basil Radford. Also Joan Greenwood, Gordon Jackson, Catherine Lacey.*

*Diana Dors*







Above: "Chance of a Lifetime" (Pilgrim Pictures, 1950), directed by Bernard Miles. Bernard Miles, Geoffrey Keene, Niall MacGinnis. Also Basil Radford. Left (top to bottom): "Seven days to Noon" (Charter, for London Films, 1950), directed by John Boulting. Geoffrey Keene, Barry Jones, Olive Sloane. "Odette" (Wilcox-Neagle, 1950), directed by Herbert Wilcox. Anna Neagle, Trevor Howard. "The Browning Version" (Javelin, 1951), directed by Anthony Asquith, from the script and play by Terence Rattigan. Nigel Patrick, Michael Redgrave, Jean Kent.



Another fascinating, though not quite so dependable, team consists of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. They form an irrepressible partnership, whose best is magnificent, whatever their worst may be. I admire their experimental courage and am more than prepared to take the bad with the very good.

Mention of these two teams inevitably brings about the thought of Alexander Korda, who, with his gift of gathering people and giving them opportunities, has done so much to help them both. It is a great loss to the industry that he himself has not directed or produced for sometime, but we do have the good news that he is going to produce *The Sleeping Beauty*.

The point that must emerge very clearly in any survey of the creative personnel of the British industry is that so many successful pictures have depended on team-work. Who, for instance, remembering that never-to-be-forgotten period of Cineguild which gave us *In Which We Serve*, *Brief Encounter*, *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist*, can entirely separate the names of David Lean, Ronald Neame and Anthony Havelock-Allan? Nonetheless, I think neither of the other members of the triumvirate would quarrel with my guess that Lean was the leading member. He has had recent setbacks, but his extraordinary singlemindedness and tenacity make me certain that he will survive these and again take his proper and deserved place as a director of international calibre.

Thorold Dickinson is one of the most remarkable men in the industry, endowed with an analytical brain which would make a newly-stropped razor seem blunt. He has not always been well-served by his material, but *Queen of Spades* seemed to me a masterpiece of style, atmosphere and mood. An important thing about his position in the industry is the extent to which his mental lucidity has stimulated the same quality in others.

Anthony Asquith is an enigma. He has as long an experience as a director as anybody in the country, is capable of making a picture of the epic (a dangerous word in any article about films, but I use it advisedly) scale of *The Way to the Stars*, but tends to rely so much of the time on versions of established stage successes like *The Winslow Boy* and *While the Sun Shines*. After that stricture it may seem like eating my own words to say that I think that *The Browning Version* exhibits more than anything else he has done for years his deep sensitivity. Perhaps the answer to the enigma is that his main interest is in people.

It is hard on the Boulting Brothers that the high quality of their work together has led us to regard them as almost Siamese Twins, and has thus tended to blind us as far as any recognition of their separate qualities goes. From this point of view I think it is excellent that they are now working more apart, for this almost doubles their usefulness.

I come now to the team of directors at Ealing—I cannot help thinking of them as a team.

Harry Watt is extraordinarily difficult to cast. His superabundant enthusiasm needs canalising—I have at times felt that the task might baffle de Lesseps himself. But when the channel has been found, as in the case of



Top: David Lean. Centre: Michael Powell. Right: Thorold Dickinson





Anthony Asquith

*The Overlanders*, I think he manages to create a style which is entirely his own.

Many people still consider *San Demetrio* to be one of the best films Ealing have turned out. This was one of the earliest films to be directed by Charles Frend, whose main disposition and great ability is to portray the English out-of-doors, as witness *The Foreman Went to France* and *Scott of the Antarctic*. He is a man who has his roots deeply planted in the soil of this country, and has a passionate interest in and a deep insight into the national character which has grown from that soil.

Robert Hamer, on the other hand, is probably at his best with the English indoors. He is in love with words, but one must grant his basic contention that, as the cinema has now been vocal for nearly a quarter of a century, it is idle dogmatically to define its scope in terms of the purely visual. I think that his treatment of *Kind Hearts and Coronets* tends to justify his point of view.

Charles Crichton has yet to find his target. He has an extraordinary ability to state what he means—insist on what he means—in visual terms, but ever since his first, and best, film—*Painted Boats*—he has been roving around in search of what he wants to say.

A newcomer to feature direction is Sandy Mackendrick. His first venture in this field was *Whisky Galore*—one of a series of comedies in which some erudite periodical found “nothing to laugh at”, although, fortunately for us, the public in this country, in France, and in the United States had the crassness to disagree with this judgment.



Robert Hamer

Even the briefest summary of the Ealing product would be incomplete without regard being paid to the contribution of Basil Dearden and Michael Relph, who have jointly been responsible for some of the Studio's biggest commercial successes—*The Captive Heart*, *Frieda*, *The Blue Lamp*. Their only fault—and it is a fault for encouraging which I must take the responsibility—is their anxiety to make too many pictures, which has led us into an occasional expensive miss like *Saraband for Dead Lovers*.

Looking back on this survey, I am conscious of its inevitable inadequacy. It consists of a discursive compilation of hastily considered expressions of personal opinion and taste. I have probably omitted consideration of many excellent directors whose output, whether consistent or sporadic, has substantially aided the prestige of British films. To them I apologise, as I do to those included for the brevity with which I have had to try to appraise them.

The one abiding fact in whose lee I take shelter is that there is an entity known as the British Cinema. It is young, clumsy, sprawling, but it is there on the hearthrug.

Critical fashion fluctuates—from week to week we are commanded to admire this that and the other school. I would like, on behalf of the people named therein, to finish this article by expressing the hope that by the time our native critics are once more disposed to admire our native product, we shall once more have succeeded in producing something worthy of their admiration.



Sandy Mackendrick



# FILMS AND THE FESTIVAL

Gerald Barry

*Director-General, Festival of Britain*

SPECIFICALLY, THE FESTIVAL of Britain is intended to display British contributions to the common human heritage in terms of the Arts, the Sciences and Industry. More generally, it has grown into something even more comprehensive and fundamental, into a nation-wide demonstration of all our inherited traditions and skills, and of our ability to use them to ensure us a future no less creative than our past.

More than this I shall not be expected to say in this specialised publication about the purposes of the Festival, especially now that the show is on. But what I have said indicates plainly that in any programme of this scope the British film at once demands an important place. Indeed, it qualifies, uniquely, under all three of the Festival's main headings—as an art, a science *and* an industry, for the film can lay claim to a foot in each of these camps. In fact, so far as the Festival is concerned, it occupies a fourth place as well, as being in itself a vehicle or instrument for expressing directly on the screen many aspects of the Festival's theme. It can do these things—it is doing them—by means of features, of documentaries, and also of experimental films which demonstrate the latest British advances in cinematographic research and techniques. Let us take a look at some of them.

To start with feature films, the outstanding example is expected to be the Festival Film *The Magic Box*, which aims to do two things at once, or perhaps I should say three: (1) to tell a good story (an indispensable requisite), (2) to be in itself a significant example of contemporary British film production, direction and acting, and (3) to record through the story a telling chapter in this country's technological enterprise, namely, Frieze-Greene's part in the invention of the motion-picture camera.

A wide range of documentary pictures has been made for the Festival, as was to be hoped for in a field in which the British film has in recent years made a world-wide reputation. Here the motion picture can fill a gap in the Festival story that can be filled in no other way (except, in certain respects, by radio): it can find ways of describing directly to the eye and ear all sorts of national activities—industrial, scientific, artistic—that for one reason or another cannot be treated three-dimensionally in exhibitions, or by alternative means. The admirable film made for the Festival on behalf of the Port of London Authority by Basil Wright is a first-class example in this category; the film sponsored by Shell-Mex is another; and there are many more. Certain scientific films are also being made for showing in the special cinema constructed within the Science Exhibition.



"The Magic Box" John Boulting and Jack Cardiff (right) lining up a shot of Margaret Johnston and Robert Donat.

The Festival Office itself has directly sponsored two documentaries. One of these has become, by tragic chance, the last example the public will be privileged to see of the brilliant documentary art of Humphrey Jennings, who was accidentally killed soon after making it. This film, called *Family Portrait*, is as it were a screen version of the Festival's central theme—the Land and People of Britain. It is a poet's creation, precise yet elusive. It should be seen two or three times to savour its full quality. The other Festival Office film, *David*, was made for the Welsh Committee by Paul Dickson, director of *The Undefeated*, which won the Film Academy Award last year. It, too, is an example of British documentary at its most authentic.

Thirdly, we come to the experimental films made for the Festival, stereoscopic and stereophonic. I am in no way qualified to discuss or even describe their technical achievement. I can, however—and I do—say emphatically that there is not a layman alive of any imagination who can fail to be excited by them. Here is something quite new which will amuse and stimulate you in itself and set your mind speculating on the cinema of to-morrow. Some fascinating experiments have also been made in using the screen to relate painting, music and language.

Many of these films are to be seen in the Telecinema in the South Bank Exhibition (as well as full-screen television, for the first time in Britain). The fact that those who planned the Festival of Britain recognised from the first the need to include a cinema within the small and jealously-sought space of this Exhibition, is perhaps in itself all the proof that could be needed that the motion picture is an essential element in a programme setting out to tell the comprehensive story of British accomplishments.



# THE FESTIVAL FILMS

## "The Magic Box"



Produced by Ronald Neame, directed by John Boulting, scripted by Eric Ambler, and photographed in Technicolor by Jack Cardiff, this film biography of Friese-Greene, British pioneer of the motion picture camera, has been made by a company specially formed for the Festival of Britain. Actors and technicians worked on a co-operative basis, and so it was possible to unite many outstanding talents in the British cinema. Robert Donat plays Friese-Greene, the Swiss actress Maria Schell his first wife, and Margaret Johnston his second. Stars making guest appearances in other parts for "The Magic Box"—which will be premiered in London soon—include Sir Laurence Olivier, Sir Ralph Richardson, Michael Redgrave, Eric Portman, Alec Guinness, Douglas Fairbanks, Valerie Hobson, Googie Withers, Kay Walsh and Glynis Johns.

Top: John Boulting (right) directs Robert Donat on the set at Elstree

Right: Maria Schell

Below: Laurence Olivier, who plays a London policeman, with cameraman Jack Cardiff





## “Family Portrait”

The last film made by Humphrey Jennings—director of many outstanding British documentaries, including “Listen to Britain”, “Fires were Started” and “A Diary for Timothy”—whose tragic death while filming in Greece last year deprives the British cinema of a brilliant film-maker: “Family Portrait” is a personal impression of Britain past and present, contrasting our associations and traditions with the various aspects of life to-day, and seeking to analyse, in fact, the whole spirit of our people.

“Family Portrait” is a Wessex Film Production for the Festival of Britain, produced by Ian Dalrymple, photographed by Martin Curtis, commentated by Michael Goodliffe, and with music by John Greenwood.



## “David”

Written and directed by Paul Dickson, who made “The Un-defeated”, this 35-minute film captures the flavour of life in a Welsh mining town over the last forty years. Its central character, played by D. R. Griffiths, becomes a miner as a young boy and ends his life as a caretaker in a school. “David”, commissioned by the Welsh Committee for the Festival of Britain, was made on location in the town of Ammanford, produced by James Carr for Worldwide Pictures, and photographed by Ronald Anscombe.



D. R. Griffiths as David



David as a young man: the scene of his wedding, with Gwyneth Petty in her first film appearance as David's young wife





## “Waters of Time”

A study of the 69-mile stretch of the Thames under Port of London Authority, this new film by Basil Wright combines an account of the daily routine of shipping operations—the turn-round of a cargo boat, the loading and unloading of cargoes, the planning of schedules—with a series of personal impressions of the river, the riverside, the lives of dockers and workers. “Waters of Time” was presented by the Port of London Authority to the Festival of Britain, and produced by International Realist. Bill Launder collaborated with Basil Wright on the script, direction and editing: the photography is by Reg Hughes, the commentaries by Paul Dehn, and the music by Alan Rawsthorne.



## “Painter and Poet”

A novel experiment, these series of films came about when a number of modern artists were asked to illustrate a poem of their own choosing: the finished films combine the drawings or paintings, a narrator or singer of the poem, and specially composed music. The artists who have contributed to the films are Henry Moore, Ronald Searle, Michael Ayton, Mervyn Peake, John Minton, Michael Rothenstein, Barbara Jones and Michael Warre. Sponsored by the British Film Institute, “Painter and Poet” was produced by the John Halas company in association with Joan Maude and Michael Warre, who originated the idea and devised the script. The music is by Matyas Seiber.

Note: “Family Portrait”, “Waters of Time”, “David”, and “Painter and Poet” are all included in the Telecinema programmes



Above: Ronald Searle's “John Gilpin”, narrated by Cecil Truncer. Below: Mervyn Peake's “Spring and Winter”, sung by Peter Pears





# THE TELECINEMA: PLANNING THE EXHIBITION

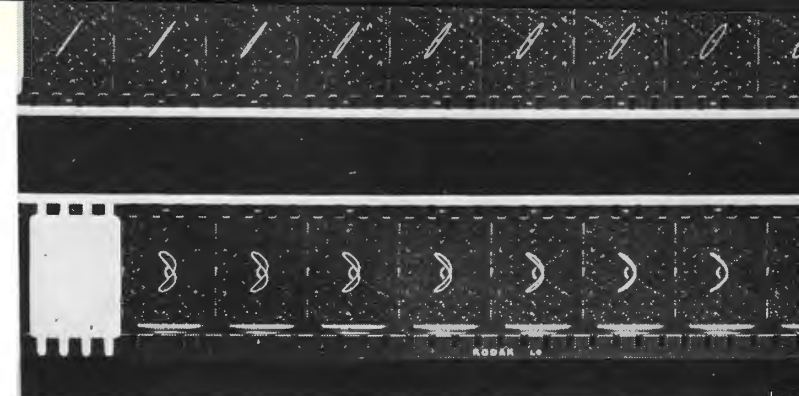
J. D. Ralph

*J. D. Ralph is the British Film Institute's representative at the Festival of Britain and was responsible for the production of the special film and television programme shown in the Telecinema in the South Bank Exhibition.*

ONE OF THE VIRTUES, perhaps, of an Exhibition, is that one is able to do things that would not in the language of the trade, be termed commercial propositions. When the question of providing a cinema in the South Bank Exhibition was first discussed, it was decided that we should attempt to produce a number of short films of a documentary character relating to the theme of the Festival and also, if possible, venture on the untrodden paths of experiment in the third dimension.

This decision necessitated an unusual degree of co-operation and joint planning between architect and filmmaker. To combine the requirements of both film and television involved rather radical alterations in accepted cinema design. The Festival was fortunate in having the services of Mr. Wells Coates as architect, and as a result of his work a building was designed which met all our basic requirements. Some of the notable features are, for example, the incorporation of the film and television projection equipment in the circle or gallery overhanging the stalls, which are below-ground and on a reverse slope. As a result the television projector is located at the mid-point in the building within 50 feet of the screen. Behind the television booth is a large projection room backed by a glass screen. Thus the public entering the cinema is able to view the film projectors and the sound equipment, which is probably of a complexity unparalleled in any other cinema.

The planning of the programme commenced over a year and a half ago. The job was not only to sort out the best subjects and secure the services of capable filmmakers but also, due to shortage of funds, to encourage the more far-sighted corporations to sponsor some of the films. These efforts, we think, were not unrewarded as the work of many of our outstanding documentary directors is represented in the final programme. Planning the experimental side of the programme, however, presented a rather different set of problems. Here we were on rather less certain ground. Except for J. A. Norling's films presented at the New York World's Fair, and Disney's stereophonic sound version of *Fantasia*, there was little practical experience on which we could draw and no experience anywhere so far as the combined use of three-dimensional colour pictures and stereophonic sound was concerned. In no country outside Soviet Russia was there an operating theatre specially equipped



for the showing of stereoscopic films. A number of experiments in the production of such films had, however, been carried out not only in the United States but in Germany during the last war and also in Britain. Most of these experiments, however, were based upon the "split frame" system which we felt obliged to disregard for a variety of technical reasons including the fact that, in our opinion, it was not easily adapted to the standard cinema projection system.

Credit is due to Mr. L. P. C. J. Dudley for designing a stereoscopic base incorporating two Newman Sinclair cameras and to Technicolor Ltd. for a second effective dual camera device. By means of this equipment we were able to produce two stereoscopic actuality films, one of them in colour. We were conscious of the fact that some of our critics were predisposed to assume that the third dimension was only another chain designed to anchor the film even more firmly to the barren ground of actuality. I, and I think others who have worked on the programme, believe rather that it is a new dimension within which the creative imagination of the artist can work. But to demonstrate this, we felt that if possible we should try to produce a film incorporating only animation work. Norman McLaren, known for his brilliant experimental work in animation, had, we knew, long been interested in three-dimensional techniques. The National Film Board kindly acceded to our request and, as a result, McLaren was commissioned to produce his three-dimensional abstract film in colour. Actually, he produced two films, the first one was remarkable from the technical point of view because only a single camera was employed and the second shorter item was done entirely by hand.

Hand in hand with the production of the special film equipment, and the production of the films themselves, went the assembly of the equipment which we required for our experiments in stereophonic sound which was to accompany the films. Considerable experimental work had been done, not only in the States but also in Holland and to a lesser degree in Britain. The equipment used in the Telecinema was produced by the British Thomson-Houston Co., Ltd., working in collaboration with Electric and Musical Industries Ltd. This equipment employed 35mm magnetically coated film base and with it one is able to record and reproduce four separate channels of sound from different sets of speakers behind the screen and at the ceiling and back of the auditorium. The cinema-going public has long accepted the convention of the sound emanating from a central point behind the screen; when it appears to move across the screen or, for special effects, from parts of the auditorium, the result is a heightened sense of realism. The essential purpose, however, is not to achieve a stunt effect but, as in the case of a third visual dimension, to provide the



film-maker with a new tool with which to achieve his effects.

Certain modifications were necessary to the design of the standard projectors and, in addition certain innovations were introduced; particularly colour surround, which has the effect of framing the picture with a portion of the light that has passed through the film itself, thus matching in colour value the picture seen upon the screen at any given moment. The net result from the technical side is that the Telecinema is equipped with two synchronous drive projectors of the latest design, coupled with two magnetic film sound recorders and reproducers, together with two additional tape recorders and reproducers, one of them binaural or two-channel, and complete equipment for television production and projection. It is thus probably the most highly equipped cinema in the world.

Before leaving the technical side, we should mention the screen in the Telecinema which was designed by J. L. Stableford to accommodate the varying requirements of television, two-dimensional films, colour and three-dimensional films. The ordinary screen would not have proved satisfactory as it contains pigment which has the effect of depolarizing the light. The present screen, sprayed with a metallic substance, solves this problem and gives a higher reflectance, thus compensating for light losses due to the use of filters or the lower light intensity of the television projector beam.

The final justification for these technical innovations must reside in the special virtues, if any, of the pictures which the audience sees upon the screen. Raymond Spottiswoode's article provides a critical evaluation of the three-dimensional films themselves.

The Telecinema, in addition to entertaining the visitor, should serve the equally important function of providing those interested in the technical and creative aspects of film and television with an opportunity for exploring the techniques that may well influence the cinema of the future.

An interesting aspect of the Telecinema is that it can also be used as a film recording studio and most of the music and effects of the stereoscopic films were actually recorded on the magnetic film machines in the projection booth. Regarding the stereoscopic films, the principle employed is simple and not difficult to understand. The camera equipment employing two interlocked cameras produces two complementary pictures of the object, representing the left and right eye view, and these in turn are projected through polarizing filters on to the screen, superimposed, and reflected back to the viewer, who in turn wears spectacles containing filters of the same characteristics as those at the projector ports. The filter has the effect of polarizing the light at a given angle. Each one, however, is orientated at right angles to the other. This means that they are mutually exclusive, and the light which has passed through one filter cannot pass through the other. Thus the picture from the right hand projector is excluded from the left eye of the spectator and vice versa. While the principle is simple, the design of the stereoscopic camera is far more complicated, and special credit is due to Raymond Spottiswoode for both his theoretical and practical work in developing the science of stereoptics.

# THREE DIMENSIONS — OR TWO?

Raymond Spottiswoode

*Raymond Spottiswoode, who has been responsible for the creation of B.F.I.'s stereofilm programme at the Festival Telecinema, has included a chapter on the stereoscopic film in his new book Film and Its Techniques (University of California Press). With his brother, N. L. Spottiswoode, he is now completing the first mathematical treatment of the film image in space, The Theory of Stereoscopic Transmission (same publishers). This will be followed by a book of more general scope, The Stereocinema, with 3-dimensional illustrations by Norman McLaren.*

IN THE YEAR 1928 the Soviet directors Pudovkin, Eisenstein and Alexandrov, then at the zenith of their prestige, issued a manifesto in which they denounced the use of dialogue in sound films, claiming that only when sound was used in direct counterpoint to the visual image could it make any contribution to the art of the cinema. They were joined by most of the more responsible of the cinema's critics.

To-day there are conservative critics who oppose just as stout a resistance to the claims of the 3-dimensional film. All it promises, they say, is that the cinema will be tied down still closer to reality. In 1928 the sound track was pasted to a picture of people endlessly mouthing; in 1951 the polaroid glasses are to reveal a world having all the sentimental solidity of Landseer's Trafalgar Square lions.

To this fundamental criticism two answers may be made, one drawn from theory and history, the other from example. If, as some historians say, mime and puppetry preceded the acted drama, there must have been an outcry when actors came on the stage to speak and when incidents were re-enacted in the round. No doubt the critics of the day were quick to complain that all the old freedoms would soon disappear. Not much time had passed, however, before the Greek drama proved the shortsightedness of this line of criticism. All the way along the drama's path, from Sophocles to Berthold Brecht, there have been dramatists who knew how to abstract from and transcend stage reality whenever they wanted to.

It is true that the new "film in space"—what the Germans call a *Raumfilm*—is the first imagistic means of transmitting 4-dimensional reality from one place to another. But this is no more than an extension of the drama's already considerable powers; it is certainly no impairment of the film's own properties. And indeed it can be shown very easily that the flat film as it has been known these sixty years is just a special case of the stereo film.

Let the reader take a piece of graph paper and draw on it a pair of Cartesian co-ordinates. Let him plot on the y-axis the magnitude of the stereo parallaxes of a left and a right eye picture on the screen, and on the x-axis the corresponding nearness factors of the different parts of the image in space. He will find that the result is a straight line which crosses the x-axis at a point corresponding to zero parallax and an image on the screen. This is, of course, a precise definition of the flat



film, and it is a mere technical accident that this special case was discovered before the general art form which is the film in space.

The theoretical argument for stereophonic sound is even stronger, no matter what horrors—what pneumatic drills under each spectator's seat—it may in practice give rise to. There is nothing sacred about the single sound track; it is a mere technical limitation peculiar to film. On the stage, sound comes to us from the place where it originates; multiple sounds take multiple paths. So it is with the orchestra. Palestrina would have been astonished had he been told that his antiphonal part writing was something highly unorthodox called "stereophonic sound". In fact it is only in the sound film as we know it to-day that dialogue, music and effects must be constricted by their passage through a single narrow throat—the sound track and the loudspeaker which gives it utterance. Anyone who has supervised the re-recording of a film must know the frustration of trying to make both a phrase of dialogue and a passage of music more prominent, only to find that a gain in one means a loss in the other. He knows that, given a speaker and an orchestra, he would be able to achieve exactly the effect he has in mind; but the wretched limitations of his instrument prevent him. All this difficulty is done away with by stereophonic sound, which gives a physical separation to sounds from different sources, as with an orchestra or a play.

When the Festival of Britain decided to make this further development of the film its own contribution in that medium, it was fortunate in being able to invite the help of an artist who in his work and writings had already begun to explore what he called "Stereographic Art". Of the four films produced up to the present for the Telecinema, Norman McLaren has made two. His little introductory film, *Now is The Time*, with its billowing clouds, its genial suns ranked far back into the distance, and the incomparably fluid figures which McLaren draws on the band of film itself, gives some notion of the animated comedy in space which the future may produce. The much longer—perhaps rather too long—*Around Is Around* is also more ambitious in conception. Geometrical in form, it is constructed as a series of short movements, in which figures derived from cathode-ray patterns perform sinuous dances against stereoscopic backgrounds of stars. McLaren is at his happiest when by some sudden twist he is able to give the abstract a human overtone. His pure ovals are transformed into lips, his lines into penetrating tongues, and the abstract in an instant becomes symbolic, only to change back next moment into abstraction or into another and unexpected symbol.

The rest of the programme gives the counter-balance of actuality. Limitations of equipment and of production budgets have made these experiments less bold. The Pathé film, *A Solid Explanation*, takes the audience into the zoo on the pretext of a comic explanation of stereoscopic theory. Points worth noting are that the 3-dimensional film gives a sense of surface texture hitherto unknown in movies (e.g. in the sea lion sequence), and that the whole frame of the picture now occupies a plane in space far in front of the real screen (this was not accomplished till after the press previews).

The last film, *The Distant Thames*, is a cameraman's picture, made almost without benefit of direction, and



"Distant Thames": the unit and the stereoscopic Technicolor camera.

showing how complex movements of planes can lend a new beauty to scenery when viewed through the twin lenses of the stereocamera. Perhaps before the Festival closes it will be possible to fill an important gap in the programme, and show in a studio sequence the impact of the space film on studio techniques.

That impact may ultimately be much greater than academic critics assume, who are never tired of lashing at the three-dimensional film for its alleged realism—for aiming at nothing better than an effect of *trompe l'oeil*. The accurate reproduction of reality is almost impossible to achieve in the cinema by foreseeable stereoscopic means. But instead the director can stretch out a studio scene until it is as long as a football field; he can squeeze it until it is as flat as a postcard; he can turn it inside out so that the nearest object is farthest away, and vice versa; he can even reshuffle at will the order in which things at different distances appear to the eye. An artist with these powers could make Picasso look like an Academician. But he would have to be another Picasso.

Unfortunately, the more complicated films become, the less headway they can make without studio support, and that means without Hollywood. The American industry is to-day sorely beset by the competition of television, but with its old first-generation pioneers still at the helm it is not likely to welcome any radical solution to its financial worries. The coming of sound, nearly 25 years ago, shook its structure to the foundations and plunged many of the large companies into bankruptcy. No one wants to repeat that experiment. Ballyhoo is cheaper than progress.

The outlook, however, is by no means wholly black. The non-theatrical film, especially that devoted to technical exposition, can gain immensely in force and clarity now that moving images can for the first time be constructed in space. 16 mm. stereo projectors are easily assembled out of standard units, and production costs should not be above 30 per cent. higher than for a comparable flat film. Repertory cinemas may also take an interest in this new development, which has shown its remarkable powers of attracting audiences. The undercurrent of excitement which runs through the house at every performance in the Telecinema attests to the great difference between the solid film and the flat. However long retarded its development may be, there is no doubt that it will ultimately enrich the powers of the cinema.



# CURRENT AND FORTHCOMING BRITISH FILMS

## "An Outcast of the Islands"

Trevor Howard, Ralph Richardson, the new discovery Kerima, Wendy Hiller and Robert Morley are the chief players of Carol Reed's new film, an adventure story set on an island in the Indian Ocean. Much of it was filmed on location in Ceylon. The story is adapted from Joseph Conrad's novel by W. E. C. Fairchild. "An Outcast of the Islands" will be seen in London later this year



*Kerima and Trevor Howard*



*Ralph Richardson*



*Trevor Howard*

*Kerima*





## "Cry the Beloved Country"

Adapted from his own novel by Alan Paton, and produced and directed by Zoltan Korda, this film, soon to be shown in London, concerns negroes and white people in South Africa. Much of it was made on location in that country. The cast includes Canada Lee, Sidney Poitier, Michael Goodliffe, Vivienne Clinton (seen in the lefthand still).



An experiment in combining opera and ballet for the screen, written, produced and directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger ("who made 'The Red Shoes'") from Offenbach's opera, "Tales of Hoffmann" is now running in London. The music is conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham: those taking part in the film include Moira Shearer, Robert Rounseville, Robert Helpmann, Frederick Ashton, Ludmilla Tcherina, Pamela Brown and Ann Ayars. The film was designed by Hein Heckroth and photographed in Technicolor by Christopher Challis.

## "Tales of Hoffmann"

Moira Shearer in the Dragonfly dance



## "The Lady With A Lamp"

Anna Neagle's latest role is Florence Nightingale, in a film now being produced and directed by Herbert Wilcox. This still shows her in a hospital sequence with Nigel Stock. An Imperadio Picture, "The Lady with a Lamp" has been scripted by Warren Chetham Stode (who wrote "Odette") from Reginald Berkeley's play. Michael Wilding appears as Sidney Herbert.





## “The Man in the White Suit”

A comedy, starring Alec Guinness as a young man who invents a fabric that will neither get dirty nor wear out and finds himself in difficulties with the textile trade, “The Man in the White Suit” is directed by Sandy Mackendrick (who made “Whisky Galore”). It is adapted from a play by Roger MacDougall. Joan Greenwood appears with Alec Guinness, and other players include Cecil Parker, Megs Jenkins, and, seen on the left and right of the melee in the still below, Ernest Thesiger and Michael Gough.



*Ealing Studios*

## “The Lavender Hill Mob”

Written by T. E. B. Clarke and directed by Charles Crichton, this comedy, about a middle-aged cashier who steals gold bullion from the Bank of England, also stars the versatile Alec Guinness, seen right with the police in close pursuit. The cast also includes Stanley Holloway, Alfie Bass, Sydney James (below).





## "The Secret People"

Two distinguished players from Europe, Serge Reggiani and Valentina Cortesa, are the stars of this new film by Thorold Dickinson, which tells of underground activities by foreign agents operating from England before the war. The story was written by Thorold Dickinson and Wolfgang Wilhelm, with acknowledgments to Joyce Cary: the film is produced by Sidney Cole, and other players include Audrey Hepburn (who appears as a ballet dancer), Charles Goldner and Megs Jenkins.



Above: Serge Reggiani and Valentina Cortesa. Right: Audrey Hepburn and John Hart in one of the ballet sequences, and Serge Reggiani and Michael Allen



## "No Vultures Fly"

The latest film by Harry Watt (director of "The Overlanders") has an African setting, and was made on location there. It stars Anthony Steele and Dinah Sheridan, both seen in this still.



## Associated British

### "Happy Go Lovely"

*This Technicolor musical unites British and American players—Vera Ellen (right, in the "Piccadilly Fantasy" ballet), Cesar Romero and David Niven. The producer is Marcel Hellman and the director Bruce Humberstone.*



### "Young Wives' Tale"

*Adapted from the successful stage comedy by Ronald Jeans, and directed by Henry Cass, "Young Wives' Tale" has Joan Greenwood, Nigel Patrick, Derek Farr, Guy Middleton, Helen Cherry and Audrey Hepburn as leading players. The still opposite shows Nigel Patrick, Joan Greenwood and Fabia Drake.*



### "Laughter in Paradise"

*A comedy of separate episodes, linked together by the will of an eccentric old man; various people are left large sums of money under this will, but unexpected conditions are attached to it. The righthand still shows the heirs all assembled under their benefactor's portrait: Ernest Thesiger (the lawyer), Guy Middleton, Alastair Sim, Fay Compton and George Cole. Other players are Anthony Steel, Beatrice Campbell and Joyce Grenfell.*

*Left: George Cole as the timid bank-clerk who has to rob a bank before he can inherit the money.*





## "White Corridors"

A story of doctors and nurses, with a hospital setting, this is the first feature film to be made in Britain by Pat Jackson since he directed the wartime "Western Approaches". The stars are Googie Withers (shown here), James Donald, Basil Radford, Petula Clark and Godfrey Tearle. A Vic Film, produced by Joseph Janni and John Croydon, "White Corridors" will be distributed by G.F.D.



## "Green Grow the Rushes"

The Association of Cine-Technicians formed a special co-operative company, A.C.T. Films, to make this comedy of smugglers and civil servants, much of it taking place on the Kentish coast. It stars Richard Burton (seen in foreground in the still on the left), Roger Livesey and Honor Blackman. It was directed by Derek Twist, and will be distributed by British Lion.



## "No Resting Place"

An enterprising young producer, Colin Lesslie, assigned the famous documentary director Paul Rotha to film this story of Irish tinkers, which was made entirely on location in Ireland. The leading players are Michael Gough, and Eithne Dunne of the Abbey theatre: many of the other actors are non-professionals, chosen on the spot. "No Resting Place" will be distributed by A.B.F.D.

## Independent Productions





## "The Galloping Major"

A group of people living in a London suburb who form a syndicate to buy a racehorse—which wins the Grand National—is the subject of this comedy, written by Monja Danischewsky and Henry Cornelius, and directed by the latter (who made "Passport to Pimlico"). The players are Basil Radford, Jimmy Hanley, Rene Ray, Janette Scott, Hugh Griffith and Joyce Grenfell. A Cornelius-Danischewsky production for Romulus Films, "The Galloping Major" is now being distributed by Independent Film Distributors, in association with British Lion.



## "Never Take No for an Answer"

An orphan boy in the village of Assisi has for constant companion a donkey; when the donkey falls ill, Pepino attempts to take her to St. Francis, whose remains lie in the crypt of the church, but is ordered away by the Abbot. He persists, and his case finally attracts the attention of the Pope. "Never Take No for an Answer" was made on location in Italy, with a mainly Italian cast, including Vittorio Manunta, who plays Pepino. Other players are Denis O'Dea, Guido Celano, Arnaldo Foa, Nerio Bernardi, Harry Weedon and Edward Hitchcock. A Constellation film, scripted by Paul and Pauline Gallico from a story by the former, directed by Ralph Smart and Maurice Cloche, produced by Anthony Havelock-Allan, it will be released by Independent Film Distributors.



## "Hotel Sahara"

A comedy set in the wartime Western Desert, this film stars Peter Ustinov as a hotel proprietor and Yvonne de Carlo as his fiancée, with Roland Culver, David Tomlinson and Albert Lieven also in the cast. A George Brown production, directed by Ken Annakin, "Hotel Sahara" will be distributed by G.F.D.







## “Hell is Sold Out”

*Based on a novel by Maurice Dekobra, and starring Mai Zetterling, Richard Attenborough, Herbert Lom and Hermione Baddeley, “Hell is Sold Out” is produced by Raymond Stross and directed by Michael Anderson. A Zelstro Production, it will be distributed by Eros Films.*

## “Valley of the Eagles”

*A topical melodrama, about the wife of a Swedish scientist who suddenly disappears, in company with his young assistant, carrying secret papers, “Valley of the Eagles” was partly shot on location in Norway. The producer is Nat Bronsten, the director Terence Young, and the cast includes John McCallum, Jack Warner, Nadia Gray and Anthony Dawson. An Independent Sovereign Production, it will be released by G.F.D.*



## “Tom Brown's Schooldays”

*A new adaptation of Thomas Hughes' famous novel, “Tom Brown's Schooldays” has John Howard Davies as Tom and Robert Newton as Dr. Arnold. Other players are Diana Wynyard, James Hayter, Hermione Baddeley and (left, standing on the coach) Max Bygraves. The film was produced by Brian Desmond Hurst, directed by Gordon Parry; a George Minter production, it has been released by Renown Pictures.*

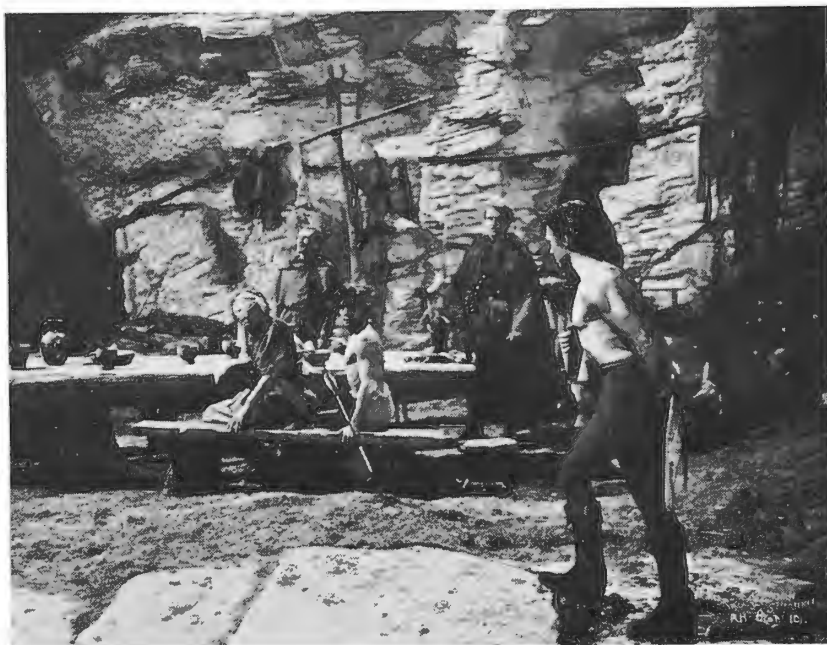


## Anglo-American Production

At least four American companies are now engaged in regular film production in this country. Films recently completed or still shooting include:

### "Robin Hood"

This Walt Disney production for R.K.O. Radio stars Richard Todd (seen right, in the still opposite) as Robin Hood, and Joan Rice as Maid Marian. Others here are Michael Hordern (Scathelock), Bill Owen (Stutely), Anthony Forwood (Will Scarlet). The producer is Perce Pearce, the director Ken Annakin.



### "Captain Horatio Hornblower, R.N."

Warner Brother's version of the famous C. S. Forester story has Gregory Peck (centre, right) in the leading part. Other players include Virginia Mayo, Robert Beatty and Terence Morgan. The film is directed by Raoul Walsh.

### "Calling Bulldog Drummond"

"Sapper's" hero reappears in a new M.G.M. film, with Walter Pidgeon as Drummond. Other players (seen left to right in the still below, right) are Patrick Doonan, Robert Beatty and Margaret Leighton. The producer is Hayes Goetz, the director Victor Saville.



### "No Highway"

20th Century Fox's adaptation of the novel by Nevil Shute stars Marlene Dietrich (below), James Stewart and Glynis Johns. The film is produced by Louis D. Lighton and directed by Henry Koster.





# JOHN GRIERSON

and

## THE DOCUMENTARY IDEA

Forsyth Hardy

IN ANY FESTIVAL SURVEY of film achievement in Britain, the documentary idea must be given an honoured place. Directly through the films it has inspired and indirectly through its influence on the studio film, it has brought international prestige to British cinema. Subtract the documentary idea and influence and British cinema will be left without those elements which give it character and help to distinguish it from the products of a lesser Hollywood studio.

A definition of the documentary idea? "The creative treatment of actuality" has served the movement from the outset. Realism, integrity, a sense of social purpose, a concern with things as they are and as they might be—these all form part of the approach to film-making which John Grierson began to expound in the early 'thirties. In twenty years the movement has made changes in emphasis and sometimes in direction; but its roots have always been in reality.

Looking back over the years of documentary's growth, as I have been asked to do, it is not difficult to plot the significant stages. The first began with *Drifters* and continued with the exploration of the new approach by the young directors Grierson gathered about him at the Empire Marketing Board: Basil Wright, Arthur Elton, Stuart Legg, Paul Rotha, John Taylor, Harry Watt, Edgar Anstey. The second saw the transformation of the E.M.B. into the G.P.O. Film Unit and the intensive training, with the help of Flaherty and Cavalcanti, of a long procession of young men who later left the protecting wing of government production and went out to find new sponsorship, or into the studios.

It is difficult to over-emphasise the importance of this phase in the development of the documentary idea. Although the basis of government sponsorship was comparatively narrow and other Ministries were slow to follow the example of the G.P.O., Grierson made the utmost of his opportunities. Under his inspiration, every film became an adventure in observation and exposition, whether the assignment was the printing of the London telephone book or the laying of a cross-Channel cable. When the subject was rewarding, as in *Night Mail* or *North Sea*, there was no muffing of the chance to make something dramatic and exciting.



In the G.P.O. Film Unit Britain had a unique and valuable film school. The directors took with them, however, something more than mere technical skill. Grierson would have been a poor teacher if they had left without an understanding of his broad conception of the use of the film in social observation and criticism, or without a desire to give practical form to their understanding. And so they went to the great industrial firms and associations—the coal industry, the shipyards, the travel groups, oil, chemicals, and gas—to make films, not of industrial processes, but of the social and political problems facing the country. It was by this means that a whole series of films was made dealing with such important subjects as slum clearance, nutrition, educational reform, local government, and international affairs. It was during this phase that the breadth and range of the documentary idea were revealed.

It should be noted that although this development stemmed indirectly from the government use of film, it did not take place under direct government sponsorship. There was indeed a phase during the late 'thirties when the social analysis of the documentary film-makers appeared to be unwelcome to authority. There was a brief, brisk battle for authenticity which demonstrated both the traditional courage and new found stature of the documentary movement.

Before the battle was properly joined the larger conflict had broken out. At this stage in its development



the documentary movement had behind it some four hundred films. The conventional phrase would be "covering all aspects of the country's life"; but in fact they did not. Some aspects, notably the communications service, were well covered and a beginning had been made to produce or adapt films for the schools. There were the magnificent "Secrets of Nature" films, patiently compiled over many years by H. Bruce Woolfe and Mary Field with their team of naturalists. There was the admirable series of films made under Grierson's supervision for the Films of Scotland Committee. But there remained great gaps which could have been filled had only the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, and Health, the Home Office and the Board of Trade been earlier in the field with films.

When war broke out and there was a new and urgent need for information, explanation and exhortation, the documentary movement was available for these exacting tasks and the years spent in training and experiment were revalued. Almost at once the importance of the film in terms of national morale was demonstrated as the passive phase of *Britain Can Take It* changed to the active one of *Target for To-night*. At the same time the film was firmly harnessed to the job of instruction and the first of a hundred "How to do it" films, some addressed to civilian and others to Service audiences, was made. Every government department had a job for a film to do. Without the documentary film movement the work could not have been done.

Many of the films made during the war served their brief purpose and died. As many, however, had a permanent value, either because they were imaginative records of the course of the war or because of their inherent qualities of observation or interpretation. In the first group I would place *Desert Victory*, *Western Approaches*, *The True Glory*, and *Burma Victory*. In the second, as we have recently been reminded, was the work of Humphrey Jennings, notably *Listen to Britain* and *Fires Were Started*. There were also the films like *The Harvest Shall Come*, *Children of the City*, and *Rotha's World of Plenty*, which continued the tradition of the documentary as social critic. And there were films like *Crofters* and *Our Country* which took time off from the war to put on record an affection for the land and its people.

It was during the war that the first unmistakable signs of documentary's impact on the studio film became apparent. Several of the documentary directors, including Cavalcanti and Harry Watt, were making feature films; but the realistic approach was also adopted by other directors whose work had previously shown little tendency in that direction. In *Which We Serve*, *Millions Like Us*, *San Demetrio, London*, *The Way Ahead*, *Waterloo Road*, and *Next of Kin* were a few of the films which applied to feature production the principles hammered out in the documentary movement.

After the war many of the feature film-makers reverted quickly to romantic escapism. One unit, however, Ealing Studios, has continued to make films with the style and approach of its *Nine Men* and *San Demetrio, London*. *The Overlanders*, *The Blue Lamp*, *Whisky Galore!* and *The Pool of London* find their essential inspiration outside

the studio and in their realistic treatment demonstrate at least one of the properties of the documentary.

If some studio film-makers have learned to use the realism of the documentary, so also have some documentary film-makers found that a sense of social purpose need not swamp a story. *The Undefeated* with its account of the courage of limbless men has more than its subject in common with the American film *The Men*; and *Out of True* provides the British counterpart for the story of mental treatment told in *The Snake Pit*.

Since the end of the war, the documentary movement in Britain has lost something of its direction and urgency. The policy makers will claim that the film men failed to make the issues of peace exciting; the film-makers will reply that there was no clear policy conception to which they could work. Whatever the explanation, the spring which has driven the documentary idea forward so strongly has run down. There is little evidence of the imagination and zeal which once characterised the movement.

Perhaps this is one of those barren intervals for re-charging which most movements experience. Perhaps, as in 1939, it will re-emerge in a different form. We should note that John Grierson, having resigned his post as Films Controller at the Central Office of Information, has become associated with John Baxter in Group Three, one of the units by which the National Film Finance Corporation is endeavouring to sustain British film-making. Their mandate is to make low budget films using exteriors and relying for success on ideas and imagination rather than studio elaboration. In such circumstances Grierson could find an opportunity to bring to the screen some of the projects which have proved too ambitious for the present narrow conception of documentary's purpose.

It is not possible to write very much about John Grierson without using the words vigour and inspiration. In the twenty-one years I have known him I have never seen him look less than alert. There is vitality in every line of his face: his body is like a coiled spring. Whenever he enters a room the mental tempo seems to quicken. His conversation has a dancing brilliance which leaves one panting always an idea or two behind. On the platform he is both preacher and teacher, with a faith in his message which grips an audience and a gift for exposition which sends them away converted. As a critic of the cinema, he can cut clean through to the heart of the matter more quickly than anyone else I know; and, as a constructive film-maker, I have heard him pull an idea out of the air and build it up sequence by sequence until the film is there before your eyes. Ever since *Drifters* he has been building—first the documentary movement in Britain, then the National Film Board of Canada and more recently as Director of Mass Communications at UNESCO. In a dozen countries, from his native Scotland to Australia, he has helped the growing points of cinema. And always he has kept his affection for the film, so that he can write as he did recently: "All I know is that you can take documentary or leave it, and the film medium is still quite a medium. My own generation has given it the excitement which goes with the first fine rapture of discovery. I only hope that a new one will give it better ideas".



# THE BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CENSORS

Margaret Hinxman

IN THAT INCONSPICUOUS office off Soho Square where the full furies of Trade, Press, Public and Pressure Groups blow unceasingly, the man whose efforts have been largely responsible for what he describes as a "revolution" in British film censorship urges further reforms, parries criticism and envisages—albeit none too hopefully—a future in which everyone may be satisfied. Since he became Secretary of the British Board of Film censors in July 1948, Arthur T. L. Watkins has been well aware of the absurd situation whereby censorship had to be geared to the susceptibilities of the under-sixteens and exercised with their possible reactions always in mind. He freely admits that the "X" certificate, for adults only, was a long overdue measure. Its recent institution is, in a sense, a triumph for those responsible film writers who have been arguing in its favour over a score of years and for the more enlightened attitude toward the business of censorship which now prevails at the B.B.F.C. under the emphatic guidance of its Secretary and President, Sir Sidney West Harris.

It is roughly estimated—on the records of past years—that the new category will probably cover no more than six or seven films a year, but the number may well be larger than that. A few productions, *Manon*, *Occupe-toi d'Amélie*, *The Miracle*, whose failure to conform to the ordinary "A" standards had earned for them a double measure of notoriety, were granted the "X" certificate immediately it came into being; and there is little doubt that *Le Diable au Corps*, *Bitter Rice*—to mention but two recent victims of the anomalous restrictions—would have been preserved uncut under its protection. A number of doubtful cases (Ophüls' *La Ronde* among them) then unseen in this country, which would have reached British screens only via L.C.C. or local authorities' licence (if at all), have now the Board's blessing. Here is concrete evidence of Mr. Watkins' "revolution" in action and as it might have been in action.

On its future effect, we can only speculate. With no written code as a rigid guide to what should and should not be shown, British censors claim to operate on the principle that it is the handling of a borderline subject or incident that matters rather than the subject or incident itself. A fundamentally sound theory, but relying for its success in practice upon the good film judgment of the censors who, we remember regretfully, have not always in the past been especially well equipped with an appreciative understanding of the cinema to tackle their work from that angle. While arguing that it still largely depends upon producers, directors, screen-writers, whether mature audiences may in future be able to watch mature film treatments of previously taboo themes, Mr. Watkins promises that members of the Board will view them without any inhibitions and we trust that the days of the mutilation of realist and intelligent works may now be past.

Inevitably, as more films, that would before have been

refused a certificate unconditionally or without cuts, are passed under the present system, there will be a reduction in the number of appeals for licences to local authorities; and inevitably there will be producers who will hope, mistakenly, that the new liberality of the Board may permit the salacious or the purely sensational exploitation of questionable subjects to be sent out into the world under a seal of respectability. (Those of us who sympathetically concede that the censor's lot is not a happy one break out in a hot flush whenever the certified *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* is used in evidence against. . . .) A rash of poorly-made American "sex education" films have recently run into trouble over their inserted reels, suitable only for medical instruction or sex education classes, on the intimate details of caesarean operations and the worst ravages of V.D. and syphilis. The censor's refusal to grant a certificate without cuts and the subsequent hawking of the film around the various provincial authorities usually receives immoderate publicity. A closer and practical co-operation is obviously desirable between the B.B.F.C. and the local authorities on this aspect of censorship, which, exposed in a certain light, seems to make nonsense of the whole system.

On political issues in the cinema the Board's policy—which, be it admitted, has allowed for a wide variety of interpretations—on paper remains unchanged: no discrimination unless the opinions expressed are so virulent that they may be calculated to provoke violent disapproval among the majority of filmgoers. But certainly the chilly attitude of previous Boards to films of a controversial nature is discouraged by a Secretary who believes that people should be made to think in the cinema as well as entertained. Mr. Watkins points to the pro-Zionist *Sword in the Desert* as proof of the B.B.F.C.'s impartiality: that the film was forced into early retirement by the activities of a minority group of fanatics is a sad instance of indirect censorship, and is, alas, something else again.

At present the new innovation seems merely to suggest that Magnani can now suffer the spasms of labour, des Grieux can now fondle his dead Manon and Amélie can now flit from bedroom to bedroom with the comforting assurance of the British censor's qualified approval. Its chief inaugurator (who mildly rebukes the intellectual filmgoer for tending to forget that the censor's duty is to *all* of the 25 or so million ticket-buyers) takes the longer view, regards it as an encouragement—or challenge—to those filmmakers who have complained of the censor's shadow across the printed page of film script. That the loosening of censorial pressure may have an effect upon future British film-making is a happy thought which must have crossed most minds, but is perhaps a little optimistic. The difficulty confronting British producers who would experiment with more adult themes and techniques has been partly the risk of severe censorship and partly a question of humdrum economics. Even fairly assured of



an "X" certificate for his work, the bold producer, or, more specifically, his backers, are deterred by the fact that the film would probably be booked only by specialist and independent cinemas; for it is barely possible that a major circuit whose box-office receipts are drawn chiefly from the family audiences of suburbia and the provinces will often indulge in a purely adult week. The American market, too, would be a highly uncertain one, for there is no relaxing of the Breen office code to conform with the British reform. And, as yet, the hope that the untapped, non-filmgoing quarter of our population may respond to a more mature film fare slanted deliberately in their direction is too nebulous to rely upon. Ironically, the producers and studios who can best afford to experiment and grasp the opportunities offered by a more broadminded censor are the least likely to do so. But then again, who can tell?

With some cause, the Board has in the past provided the industry and the public with a convenient whipping boy: accused on the one hand—by those fed upon the hints of censorial suppressions and convinced that all manner of provocative masterpieces are being withheld from them—of too great stringency; and, on the other—by pater-familias who fear that their seven-year-old is picking up bad habits from the movies—of too great leniency. Though the "X" certificate will certainly lessen the number of complaints from the former, it is not the cure for all ills. The next stage is the institution of the "C" category, for films particularly suitable for children, which is still under discussion and should go part of the way in assuaging the doubts of mum and dad—but not all the way.

Some parents, Mr. Watkins is convinced, are not selective enough over their children's filmgoing and are too ready to blame the censor for their own laxness: the "A" certificate is intended as a warning to parents to find out if the film in question could have a bad effect upon the child in question; whereas the boy of 13 or 14 may be unmoved by a show of violence which would frighten a six-year-old girl, the implications of a particularly passionate love scene would be lost upon the younger child while making a deep impression upon the older. But he believes—and most of us who have welcomed the official sanctioning of the "X" certificate will agree with him—that the answer to this is not to be found in pinning "X"s indiscriminately, as has been urged, upon films which would normally receive an "A", on the grounds that they might be harmful to *some* children. Many parents and social bodies are genuinely concerned about the cinema's effect upon the child mind, but certainly there is a large measure of satisfaction in the knowledge that Miss Mary Field—formerly of the excellent Children's Entertainment Films—is now a member of the Board.

The changes in the B.B.F.C. system, though, must render the censor's task even more complex. He must be capable of making finer distinctions and justifying his decisions before critics from all quarters. Armed with an immense enthusiasm for the cinema, Mr. Watkins obviously finds that the censor's responsibilities to the filmgoing millions, the trade and the arbiters of film art weigh heavily upon his shoulders; but one's impression is that the industry is fortunate in having such an able pair of shoulders to carry the burden at a crucial time

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(Sir MICHAEL BALCON and EALING, *continued from page 9*)

is not one who did not make his first picture in Ealing".

Sir Michael replies equally frankly when I ask him about the beginnings of his career:

"When I started after the first World War, the cinema as a medium was new. I was carried away by its possibilities which I sensed, but I certainly did not understand its implications. I began by making sponsored industrial pictures and got my technical training as I went along. I brought to my work nothing but the enthusiasm of a boy who embarks on an unusual experiment. It was only much, much later that I developed a flair for organising.

"I made my first feature film in 1922 in the Islington Studios with Graham Cutts as director and Alfred Hitchcock as art director. It was *Woman to Woman*. The result was very encouraging, too encouraging in fact, because the success went to my head and my next picture, *The White Shadow*, was shockingly bad.

"At that time I was associated with Victor Saville, and, unfortunately, we were forced by the trend, then prevalent in the film industry, to concentrate more on quantity than on quality. Hence a high proportion of

failures, from which, of course, I learned a great deal.

"The period of the second World War became a turning point in the history of Ealing Studios. Only then we started realising the true significance of the cinema as a mass medium and the enormous power entrusted to film-makers. The documentary-cum-fiction technique that we then developed was to a certain extent dictated by requirements of propaganda. Still, it has proved its value and its great possibilities in the post-war years".

And now that Sir Michael has been offered a much wider scope for his activity this may prove another turning point in his life's work.

"In the new companies with which I am associated", he says, "I shall mainly serve in an advisory capacity, that is if the people concerned are willing to listen. I think they will because they know that I have no axe to grind. I take great interest in their scripts and advise them on general production policy. And I certainly hope to introduce into the other companies the very same principles which have guided me so far in my work for Ealing Studios".



# GOOD COMPANY

Mary Field

THE PROVERB SAYS "A man is known by the company he keeps" and it is generally agreed, with the late Sir Michael Sadler, that one of the most valuable means of indirect moral education is contact with good example, that is, as we say keeping good company. After six years of pioneer work in the field of special entertainment films for children, "Children's Entertainment Films", the group that carried out this production experiment in Britain, found that its work had become simplified into one purpose: to ensure that, when children all over the world see children's films in cinema clubs, matinees, schools, village halls and hospitals, they find themselves in good company provided by the characters in the films.

For the last forty years at least, those who have associated themselves with the welfare of children have felt anxiety over the films that children see in the commercial cinema; but the approach to this problem has been a negative one, leading in some countries to the exclusion of children under sixteen from cinema theatres. The first positive approach was made by the U.S.S.R. which, soon after 1930, began to produce special films to entertain children and, obviously, to introduce them to what the Soviet considered good example, politically. In 1944, J. Arthur Rank set up the group of film technicians, who became known as Children's Entertainment Films (C.E.F.), in this country to carry out the same kind of positive work. But his general objective was "to do the children good" with no reference to politics or denominational religion. Mr. Rank's original idea was, each week, to produce one short film with a direct moral purpose; these pictures were to be shown in the Odeon and Gaumont Cinema Clubs which are included in his Organization and to which approximately 400,000 children go each Saturday morning. But, in a very short time, it became clear that one ten-minute film of this type was out of place in a programme made up entirely of adult commercial pictures, nor could plot or character be developed in so short a time. Special films for children, if they were to fulfil their purpose, must eventually make up the whole programme and include long stories, short films of all description, cartoons and serials.

The problem to be faced in 1944 was two-fold; first, how to produce films that children could comprehend and enjoy, and, secondly, how to decide what the moral content of these films should be. Two bodies were called into being, "Children's Entertainment Films" and "The Advisory Council on Children's Entertainment Films"—groups which were independent but complementary. C.E.F. consisted of a small group of film technicians whose business was to organize the production of children's films by various companies all over the world, and, in most cases, outside the Rank Organization. This method of production gave the greatest flexibility and enabled a great many members of the film industry to make useful contributions to the children's film movement, while, at the same time, the supervisory powers of C.E.F. gave a continuity of purpose to

the whole scheme and enabled a special type of production for children's films to be evolved. The Advisory Council was made up of national groups representing parents, teachers and youth workers and of the government departments which are interested in the leisure time of children. But, as it was realised that films are only one influence among the many which shape the culture pattern of our children, representatives of the B.B.C. Children's Hour and of the Libraries Association were added so that children's viewing could be in line with their reading and listening. The Christian Cinema Council, the British Film Institute, and the National Council for Mental Health later accepted invitations to send representatives.

But there is an old adage in the film industry that, while it is easy enough to make a film, it is not so easy to get an audience to see it. If the children's film experiment was to be a success, it was essential that the Club audiences, the majority of whom were between the ages of seven and twelve, should consider the films, specially produced, sufficiently entertaining to be worth spending 6d. a week at the box-office to see them. Although the children in the Rank Clubs were, from the start, obviously intrigued and interested in the early productions of C.E.F. they were, as is natural in children, extremely conservative in their film-going and appeared unwilling to have the pattern of their cinema entertainment altered out of hand. Both C.E.F. and the Advisory Council realised, therefore, the need for research into the reactions of Club audiences to the films that were being produced. By such research they believed they might genuinely advance through the method of trial and error, a method which had been agreed upon by both groups at the very outset of their association.

The use of questionnaires was unanimously discarded. Seeing films is a communal activity and it is almost impossible for child or adult to recall its thoughts on films, when segregated from the audience of which it formed a part. This suspicion of the value of questionnaires was confirmed by the Departmental Report on Children and the Cinema, 1950:—"... commonest of the existing methods (of research) involves the use of questionnaires, personal interviews, classification of opinion, interest inventories, and sometimes psychological tests, all invented for adult audiences and most of them in America. But to apply them uncorrected to large scale tests of children is of dubious value. . . ." The new methods of research that were evolved by C.E.F. for the Advisory Council included personal observation of audiences; the personal observations of sixty-three selected cinema managers from all over Great Britain whose findings were compared and correlated; the recording of the sounds made by children in relation to the sound track of the film they were viewing; and, finally, the photographing of one section of an audience by means of Infra-red photography at certain selected points in a film, the pictures of the children being always



placed in relation to the actual frames of the film with which they corresponded. The Conference on Children's Entertainment Films held in connection with the Venice Film Festival in 1950 was unanimous in recommending to every country that was represented there, that it should follow the example of Great Britain in this last method of research, which is, fortunately, continuing to develop in this country. Besides all this material collected in Great Britain, some reliable observations were also made available from Canada and Holland. By means of these methods much was discovered with regard to the production of films for children, although, naturally, a brief six years of research is hardly sufficient to provide definite documented evidence of children's reactions to films. Reactions noted, too, are only immediate and it is impossible to assess the ultimate effects of any specific film on any individual child. But enough general evidence became available to guide C.E.F. in producing and the Advisory Council in selecting the content of the films. It seems that the natural taste of children for films, which they understand, is good. They are very susceptible to what they consider to be beautiful, although, naturally, their taste is not always the same as that of adults. They have some difficulty in appreciating all that is on the screen and a special technique of photography and of scripting is necessary if they are to be able to enjoy the film to the utmost. Boys and girls differ sharply in taste, particularly in what they consider to be funny. Children view human beings through their own eyes and so a special type of casting both of adult characters and of children is required. Providing children are not jerked out of their illusion by some lack of logic in the development of the plot or characterisation they identify themselves completely with the children on the screen, so that, at the end of a specially produced children's serial they will enquire if they will not "meet" any more the film children who have become their friends. It is abundantly clear that, in a children's film, the plot and action must be concerned primarily with children, or failing them, with animals. By observing children viewing programmes which included adult commercial films as well as special children's films it has become evident that children do not really understand the plot and motivation of adult films. Their eyes are held by any action on the screen, but as soon as dialogue begins they pay no attention, however essential to the plot the dialogue may be, and their interest returns to the screen only when violent action catches their eyes once more. In other words, they are usually being encouraged, when they visit the cinema, to have their eyes and ears titilated while their minds remain dormant. They are being conditioned into the passive, unintelligent adult audiences which fill cinemas all over the world. On the other hand, if children are supplied with good entertainment films within the scope of their understanding, they become a most active and intelligent audience and can undoubtedly be trained to retain this alertness in the cinema so that when they grow up they may become that ideal intelligent audience for which most film technicians would wish to cater. Children who are accustomed to good company in the cinema in youth will probably continue to seek such good company in adult life. This fostering of the intelligence of audiences is important nationally and internationally when we remember how much money government and

international bodies spend on films for the information of cinemagoers who are all too frequently unable to assimilate the message of such pictures.

It was the business of the Advisory Council to decide what is "good company" for children. They worked on the principle that such company includes boys and girls who are co-operative, active, intelligent, adventurous, who may do wrong but who own up to their faults and try to make amends and who are, above all, not sentimental. Such adults as may be essential for the development of the plot of a children's film should preferably be of the same type as the children and bad characters should at no time appear heroic or attractive. The children found that the company which they encountered at the cinema, and, which was, according to the Advisory Council, "good" for them, was also "good company" in this sense.

Not only were the child audiences that were under observation ready to spend two hours on Saturday mornings with screen children of their own nationality, but C.E.F. found that, when it produced or adapted films overseas (actually in thirteen different countries) the British audiences were ready to accept the foreign children as good company too, while foreign children from Indonesia to Iceland have enjoyed meeting British children in C.E.F. films, one production having been distributed in as many as 34 territories. From this it would appear that, in children's films, we have a great opportunity for developing international understanding at the early emotional age, between seven and eleven, so preparing for the intellectual approach to the United Nations which should come at a later period.

After a brief six years of trial and error, the work of Children's Entertainment Films and of the Advisory Council has established itself as a part of national life. To quote the Departmental Report on Children and the Cinema again, "... it is work of great originality and enterprise ... we attach the greatest importance to the development of this project. ..." Moreover, this British film venture has attracted ever-growing interest overseas, so that C.E.F. has become the centre for all activity that relates to children and entertainment films, this side of the Iron Curtain.

To sum up, this experiment which started so modestly in 1944 has developed rapidly and finally resolved itself into one single purpose which is that all over the world, when children go to the pictures, unattended by their parents or guardians, they should nevertheless, through the pictures on the screen, find themselves in good company.

NOTE.—From 1944 to 1950, until the problems of the British Film Industry made long term investment in Children's Entertainment Films no longer feasible for one commercial film group, C.E.F. produced 21 Long Story Feature Films, 6 Short Stories, 27 episodes of Serial Films, 9 Interest Films, 67 Magazine Films, 27 Nature Films, 16 Travel Films, 7 Cartoons, and 6 Community Singing Films.

This production represents one sixth of the number of children's films that are essential. Since a child audience grows up and changes every three years, only one hundred and fifty six programmes are necessary, one for every week for three years. After those programmes have been completed, production can be concerned with replacing out-of-date films and with experimental pictures.



## A WINDOW ON EUROPE

Norman Wilson

ONE OF THE MOST interesting recent developments in Britain has been the rapid growth in the number of film societies, which has increased from 46 to over 200 since the end of the war.

The impetus for this vigorous growth, however, is the result of many years of careful nourishment and cultivation. The history of the movement goes back to the late 'twenties, at the end of the silent era, when a number of societies devoted to "the study and advancement of film art" and similar aims came into existence. The original London Film Society began even earlier and its pioneering work established the pattern for groups in other parts of the country and, in fact, all over the world.

In the early days the main object of the film societies was to propagate a belief in the potentialities of the cinema as a creative medium of expression. They had not much to go on, perhaps, by way of illustration—some Germanic symbolism from Ufa, the dynamic cutting of the Russians and the exciting fumbings of the French *avant garde*. Little as it was, however, the material was explosive, heady stuff and enough to convince anyone of artistic perception that here, indeed, was a new art form of manifold possibilities.

The trouble was that the people in this country who might have been expected to appreciate these potentialities did not go to the cinema. If they had gone they would have found little to inspire their enthusiasm, for the general fare of the commercial cinema was produced to please the uncritical masses. Only by showing to people with receptive minds the work of such filmmakers as Pudovkin, Eisenstein, Pabst, Fritz Lang, Carl Dreyer and one or two others, could any progress be made towards the recognition of the film as a serious art.

Some means of showing such films had to be found, and this need was the genesis of the film societies, first in London then in Glasgow and Edinburgh and elsewhere. But the mere screening of "unusual" films, as they were quaintly termed in those days, was not enough to arouse interest and appreciation. Barriers of prejudice and indifference, as a result of the show-ground tradition of the early cinema, had to be broken down. An entirely new audience had to be created and the pioneers of the film society movement had to become missionaries, fired with the zeal of prophets, to achieve even the beginnings of their aim. They preached, they wrote, they button-holed with tenacity and enthusiasm. Gradually their persistence began to have effect. More and more people began to attend the private viewings. Because the performances were largely exotic they tended to attract the lunatic fringe, but that was natural and perhaps necessary at the time. Among the cogno-

scenti, montage became a word to conjure with. Films—or rather *film*, as the bright boys and girls liked to talk about—had come to be recognised in an artistic sense, as quite the latest thing.

It is all slightly amusing to look back on after two shattering decades of history and a complete revolution in the technique of the art which fluttered the coteries of the 'twenties. Just when the virtues of the silent film had come to be appreciated, when the form of the medium had become established and its conventions accepted—the whole structure was set aside by the introduction of sound. The new element entirely altered the cherished theories of the cineastes, and the banal and raucous sounds which emitted from the screens ushered in a period of mediocrity never equalled in the silent days. The more feckless enthusiasts were disillusioned and many of the film society pioneers were disheartened. But those with greater vision realised that sound added a new and liberating element to the film, and they accepted the development as a stimulating challenge.

The outstanding achievements of the silent cinema—now so often referred to as the classics of the screen—were not made for a minority audience of connoisseurs. They were made for the ordinary cinema public, and many of them had an enormous popular success. It was the film societies, however, in this country at least, which secured esteem for their artistic virtues. By the early 'thirties there were film societies in most of the larger cities of England and Scotland, and their existence focused attention on the problems of artistic technique (as apart from purely technical developments) posed by the addition of sound. Critics knew that there was now a small but important and growing public, and some of them began to write seriously with this public in mind. Perhaps this effect on the critics was the great achievement of the first era of the film society movement. The film trade didn't care much about what the few film society members thought, but they did pay attention to the words of the critics, as did the general public which paid its money at the box-office. Until then most of the great films had been the result of individual genius often working at variance with the instincts of an unsympathetic and somewhat uncouth industry. But now the industry itself, unconsciously and without considered policy, began to pay attention to the critics. To measure their success they now had a new standard apart from the box office—and that too was influenced by what the critics wrote.

Their first and perhaps greatest achievement behind them, the film societies entered what might be called their second era with new tasks to perform. Their main activities continued much as before—exhibiting



films which illustrated or contributed to the development of the film as an art and providing a platform and forum for the theorist and craftsman—but the results were different.

The silent film was international in its appeal. The language of the moving picture was universal, but speech confined films within national boundaries. The result was that in this country only British or American pictures were exhibited in the cinemas and we lost all contact with Continental production. Only the film societies maintained the old international quality of the cinema, and had it not been for them there would have been no opportunity of seeing what was being produced in Russia, Germany, Sweden, France and elsewhere. This was important in other ways besides cinematically, for those were tendentious years in Europe and their significance inevitably was reflected in the films of the period.

In showing these films the societies opened a window on Europe. At the same time they began to take a more special interest in production at home. Britain's outstanding contribution to the development of cinema had been in the documentary field. It was John Grierson's passionate belief in the film as an instrument for social purpose that got the Empire Marketing Board Film Unit established. This was the foundation of the documentary film movement of which Grierson has remained the inspiring influence and driving force. Because they were free of the tyranny of the box-office, but more particularly because, as Grierson has put it, they had the good sense to use the aesthetes, the early documentary producers experimented in new forms of technique. Their material was actuality and their ends the presentation of facts to stimulate social consciousness; and it was in seeking for methods of presentation that would not merely record but interpret reality that experiment was so essential. There must be a point in dealing with information where "the flame shoots up and the light kindles and it enters into the soul and feeds itself there". There had to be a flash-point. The documentarian had also to be a poet or there would be no kindling of the idea.

And so in the 'thirties documentary was the exciting thing in British cinema, with Grierson as its dynamic influence. The work of Paul Rotha, Basil Wright, Cavalcanti, Arthur Elton, Harry Watt and other young directors began to assume a significance which the film societies were quick to realise. Documentary gained through their interest not only support and encouragement but a public platform and critical recognition. British realist films appeared in the same programmes as the most notable feature films from the Continent and they were judged by the same standards. This was but right, of course, and they deserved no less, but they could not have obtained it in any way other way.

The film societies have since the earliest days maintained an affectionate pride in the achievements of documentary. Indeed it was one of the oldest societies, the Edinburgh Film Guild, which organised the first International Festival of Documentary Films. For three weeks each year the Edinburgh Festival presents the most notable work of the realist, documentary and experi-

mental producers of all countries, and gives it a world focus. This year, the fifth annual Edinburgh Film Festival, though remaining international in its scope, is fitting in with the general plan of the Festival of Britain and will make a special feature of British documentary.

The third and present phase of film society activity is largely one of expansion. Nearly every large town now supports and enjoys its own organisation which presents each winter a series of selected programmes, drawn from international sources. In the larger centres these are generally shown in commercial cinemas, usually on Sundays, with audiences ranging from about 250, to over 3,000. But the movement is by no means confined to the cities and towns. With the great advances in 16 mm projection since the end of the war, it is now economically possible to provide performances for audiences of under a hundred, and this has enabled groups to be established in quite small communities and in the most outlandish areas. There is an active society, for instance, in the Shetland Isles, and in Stornoway, in the Hebrides, the local film society of some sixty members sees with a knowledgeable eye all the recent Continental productions.

Despite its unity of aim, one feature of the film society movement is remarkable in these days of centralisation and standardisation. It has not been organised by a national body spreading a network of branches throughout the country. Each society has arisen spontaneously from the desires of its own community, or as the result of the enthusiasm of a few individuals; and each society has retained not only a physical independence, but often a sturdy and admirable freedom of outlook and character. The separate societies are freely linked, though not controlled, through a system of federation. In England and Wales affiliation is to the Federation of Film Societies, and in Scotland to the older Federation of Scottish Film Societies. Both these bodies work in close association with the British Film Institute which gives them valuable help in importing films and in operating a booking agency on their behalf.

Film societies, unlike so many community activities, are not something "laid on". They are a natural growth, and this fact, together with their independence of any stultifying central control, is the virtue wherein lies the strength of their influence.

If their combined membership, amounting to many thousands, were organised and marshalled on a national basis, it could, no doubt, be used as a bargaining force or a weapon of some power in cinema politics. That way, however, it might become an instrument of factions. It is fortunate, therefore, that the movement has developed its present pattern as the result of free growth. Its influence, the effervescence of enthusiasm and belief and a real love of the medium has been deep and widespread because it has been concerned with creative issues. The support received by worthwhile films of whatever character, the steady growth of a discriminating film public, and the development of intelligent criticism and analysis have been helped and accelerated to a considerable extent by the activities of the film societies, whose function now, as always, is to remain in the vanguard of cinema progress.



# AMATEUR FILMS IN BRITAIN

Tony Rose

ALTHOUGH AMATEUR FILMS have been made in Britain for twenty-five years and more, they have until recently attracted little notice either from the professional industry or from the general public. Of the millions who visit the cinema each week, probably not more than fifty thousand or so have ever seen an amateur film. And most of these are the ones who themselves own movie cameras.

The reasons for this obscurity are not far to seek. First, a vast number of amateur films are purely personal records, chronicling the seaside holiday or the first, uncertain steps of a child on the back lawn. They aspire to entertain only a small family audience and their producers are, for the most part, no more interested in film making as such than is the ordinary person who takes snapshots.

Secondly, those of us who class ourselves as "serious" amateurs tend to regard film making as an end in itself and do not exert ourselves overmuch to attract lay audiences. Some of us work as one-man units, others join or help to form cine clubs, of which there are now about one hundred and twenty actively engaged in production. We pass our films from one to another for criticism but beyond that they seldom go.

The films themselves vary from newsreel-type reportage of local events to specialised documentaries and from experimental "avant garde" pieces to straight fictional screenplays. Some of the latter employ a cast and unit of twenty or so members. All are made on staggeringly low budgets.

Whereas most professional first features in Britain still cost upwards of £100,000, amateurs can seldom afford to spend more than £100 on a picture and usually spend far less.

Naturally this necessary economy shows on the screen as it imposes a number of material limitations. The cost of substandard film stock—now a little more than £2 for a hundred feet of 16 mm.—has the effect of keeping our films short, although not always short enough.

The high cost of sound-on-film recording makes synchronous dialogue a rare luxury. If there is any sound at all, it usually consists of a simple musical accompaniment recorded on gramophone discs. Likewise set building is kept to a minimum or avoided entirely. Indeed, many of us, having no studios to work in, limit our actual shooting activities to the spring and summer. The sunlight, which then gives a natural sparkle to our scenes, has the extra advantage of costing nothing.

A notable exception to this rule is a club called Ace Movies who specialise in elaborately contrived impressionistic sets and whose production, *Marionettes*, has done more than any other film for the prestige of British amateurs in Europe. A macabre fantasy treated in a strictly formalised manner, it took third prize in 1949 at the International Congress which is held each year under the auspices of U.N.I.C.A. And, in the view of many spectators, it deserved first place.

The Ace Movies unit, which was formed in 1929, has

continued the tradition of the silent cinema, and particularly of U.F.A., to the present day. Currently engaged in filming *Sakura*, a story based on the legend of the Willow Pattern plate, it occupies a distinguished but lonely place in the amateur movement.

More typical, insofar as style and production methods are concerned, is the High Wycombe Film Society of which I am a member. Our films are usually naturalistic, open-air subjects scripted to fit a particular locality in the neighbourhood. One of these, *Paper Boat*, represented Britain at last year's International Congress but failed to repeat the success of *Marionettes*—it was placed twelfth among sixteen entries.

The film is a love story set against a rural stretch of the River Thames. It is silent, has no sub-titles and runs for 35 minutes. We made it at week-ends (whenever the unit and cast could be assembled) over a period of about four months at a total cost of £40. Most of the money went on film stock and photofloods for lighting the interiors.

The camera was the private property of the cameraman, purchased second-hand for £17 10s. It had a fixed focus lens that took in everything from five feet to infinity. For close-ups we stuck on supplementary lenses with bits of adhesive tape. When we wanted a tracking shot we placed the cameraman in a perambulator and wheeled him around.

Lamp-holders and reflectors were home-made. Our only other equipment consisted of two stirrup pumps and part of a vacuum cleaner for manufacturing wind and rain effects. We wrote a rainstorm into the script, partly so that we should not be held up by bad weather. But there were hold-ups just the same. A landing stage, which figured in several scenes, sank and had to be raised from the river bed before we could resume shooting. The leading man fractured his spine and was encased in plaster for several weeks—a necessary shot of him plunging into the river fully clad was finally taken in October.

All the interiors were the real thing. One entire sequence in the bar parlour of a public house had to be completed between the hours of 2 p.m. closing and 6 p.m. opening time.

I mention these handicaps and difficulties not because they are unique but because they are very similar to those encountered by every amateur unit. The struggle to overcome them is, of course, fun in itself. Beyond that the highest reward that most of us seek is a prize in one or other of the national contests that are held annually.

The most popular of these contests is that organised by a monthly magazine, the "Amateur Cine World", in which silver plaques are awarded to the "ten best films of the year". The winning entries are given a London premiere and, in recent years, have been circulated free of charge to film societies and cine clubs throughout the country, with the proviso that a minimum audience of two hundred be assembled for each performance.

As a result of this and the enterprise of the British Film Institute, in adding some of the better amateur films to the hire section of the National Film Library, a wider public is undoubtedly being reached, if not converted. The "ten best" of 1949 have been booked solidly for the past twelve months and are still going the rounds. In scope and subject matter they are a fairly representative selection, seven having been produced by



one-man units, three by clubs.

*Post Haste*, which achieved first place, is a short, sometimes lyrical piece in colour about the dreamy wanderings of a small boy who is sent out to post a letter and never does. *Nature's Way* is an amateur naturalist's record of insect and animal life which makes excellent use of micro-photography. *Nursing Story* is a propaganda film made by a surgeon with the object of attracting recruits to the nursing service. *Eggs for Breakfast* is a family holiday film, lifted out of the rut by cinematic and fictional treatment. *The Beginning* is a faintly surrealist comedy, hung on the framework of a dream. *The River is Spanned* is a painstaking documentary about the building of the Forth Bridge and *Nemesis* is a "psychological" melodrama, tricked out with good technical qualities.

The club productions are *Meet Me in the Local*, a straight and sober (apart from its title) account of how a local newspaper is printed, *Paper Boat* and *Only for Telling*, an episodic comedy flavoured with slapstick.

From all this it is hardly possible to say what progress can be expected from Britain's amateur film movement. A large section will, no doubt, continue to be preoccupied with technicalities. Thus Denys Davies, President of the prize-bedecked Fourfold Film Unit, states boldly: "We don't care a damn what our films are about. We don't have any message to offer. The subjects aren't important

—so long as they give us a chance to make interesting gadgets and experiment with new effects".

A much smaller section—because amateur film enthusiasts nearly always start by being interested in camera mechanics—will experiment on an aesthetic level. Others may prefer to side with Stanley Reed of the Look and Learn Film Unit. Mr. Reed believes that amateurs should concentrate on making films which serve a directly useful purpose. Such a policy, however, must seem a trifle drab to the majority of us who are in the business for the fun of the thing and are inclined to leave the useful jobs to those who are paid to do them.

Personally I do not believe that progress will come from any deliberately formulated policy. Rather, I pin my faith—blindly perhaps—to the fact that amateur films are now, for the first time, attracting non-technical audiences composed of people who are not much impressed by ostentatious camera tricks. And the International Congress, which is being held this year in London and Glasgow as a part of the Festival celebrations, may well arouse the interest of other laymen.

To me the audience is the determining factor because I believe that the desire to please, or in some way stimulate, an audience is the driving force behind all film making. The amateur's main advantage in being an amateur is that he is free from the accompanying and restricting fear of financial failure.

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(EDINBURGH FILM FESTIVAL, continued from page 66)

and *The Bridge of Time* showed how rewardingly British cameramen can use colour. As always, the educational and scientific programmes were dominated by the British entries.

There was a larger entry from the United States, headed by Robert Flaherty's re-edited version of *The Titan* and Walt Disney's *Seal Island* and including such interesting work as *Muscle Beach*, *Shipbuilders of Essex*, *Grandma Moses*, *The Moor's Pavane*, and *Ai-Ye*. It was clear from these and other films that there are imaginative forces stirring outside Hollywood and the commercial movie. The French contribution was also large and variously impressive, ranging as it did from the brilliant parody of *Les Charmes de l'Existence* and *Transports Urbains* to the persuasive ingenuity of *Jeux de Mains* and the powerful argument of *La Montagne est Verte*. There were similar striking contrasts among the feature films which linked Nicole Védres' searching commentary on the times, *La Vie Commence Demain* with Ludwig Berger's gossamer whimsy, *Ballerina*.

This was a Festival of exacting standards. Nothing could match *Kon-Tiki* in either simplicity or strangeness: if we judge by the amount of interest it aroused it was the outstanding success of the 1950 Festival. Similarly, there was nothing so warmly human as Luciano Emmer's *Sunday in August* whose clamorous vitality seemed to envelop the cinema. No other film attempted so long a sweep through time as Paul Zils' *Our India*. And the round of the seasons was brought memorably to the screen by Henri Storck in *Symphonie Paysanne*.

As it has grown the Festival has developed a pattern.

The performances are so arranged that they enable a visitor to attend other events in the three weeks of concentrated cultural activity: the main performances are on Sundays, with forenoon performances on weekdays and specialised programmes in the evenings, when educational, scientific, and art films are shown. There are also special performances of children's entertainment films—one of the few gestures to young people made during these three weeks. Each year has seen the publication of *Documentary* which attempts a world survey of achievement in the realist cinema with an important leading article by John Grierson.

In 1951 the Edinburgh Film Festival will take account of the general British celebration of which it forms a part. As with Denmark in 1950, there will be a retrospective programme of notable films which have influenced the development of British documentary. There will be special programmes of British films, including one devoted to the films made for the Festival year. It is probable, indeed, that the Festival films will be more easily seen in Edinburgh than anywhere else in the country. A British feature film may also be chosen to open the Festival.

But this is intended to be a survey of achievement, not of promise. In five years the Edinburgh Film Festival has established itself as the focal point of world interest in realist, documentary, and experimental films. It has served the film-makers by introducing their work to an international audience; and it has served film students by bringing them experiences which otherwise would have been beyond their reach.



# THE EDINBURGH FILM FESTIVAL

Forsyth Hardy

With four years behind it, the Edinburgh Film Festival has passed through the stage of brave experiment and has become an accepted event in Britain's cultural calendar. When August comes around and the flags go up in the old grey capital in the North; when the stars of opera, drama and ballet foregather and the best in art and music is on show, the films are there also, to keep the youngest of the arts proudly in the picture set before the great cosmopolitan audience.

To secure this place for the film was at least one of the aims of those who launched the Festival. When Edinburgh announced to a world weary from war that it proposed to hold a great Festival of the Arts in 1947, it seemed inconceivable that the film should be omitted. And so the Edinburgh Film Guild, with the help and advice of the film-makers in the South, prepared a plan for a Film Festival—the first International Film Festival to be held in Britain—which would form an integral part of the parent event.

In 1947 it seemed important that the Edinburgh Film Festival should have a special character, something to distinguish it from the rash of festivals spreading across Europe from Venice. The aim was not only to avoid the criticism, since intensified, that the same few films make the round of the summer festivals. It was to offer the visitor, not just another miscellaneous collection of films, but a specialised selection providing a world survey of one school of film-making.

Why did we choose the realist film? There were a number of sufficiently solid reasons. John Grierson, founder of the documentary movement in Britain and the leading exponent of its ideas across the world, is a Scot, and many of his disciples have come from north of the Border. Several of the key films which influenced the movement—*Drifters*, *Night Mail*, *North Sea*, *Squadron 992*—were set in Scotland. The work of the Films of Scotland Committee represented the first attempt to project the life of a country in a planned and co-ordinated group of films. It was in lectures to the Scottish film societies and educationists that the documentary pioneers made their faith articulate. In the words of Sir Stephen Tallents, "nowhere in the world has the documentary creed been upheld and practised over the years with greater persistence or greater fidelity".

As is his way, John Grierson has looked a little more deeply into the reasons for this Scottish devotion to the realist method of film-making. The Scot in all his works, he has suggested, is closer to the idea of building art out of the ordinary than you find in many other countries: the infinite common sense of Hume the philosopher; the common touch in Burns which becomes "A Man's a Man for a' That", "My Love is Like a Red, Red, Rose", or "The Cottar's Saturday Night"; the great pattern which Scott made out of ordinary people in "The Heart of Midlothian"; the searchlight sense of reality in Carlyle's "French Revolution". The Scot's devotion to the cinema of reality may well be part of this tradition.

It was against this background that the Edinburgh

Film Festival was launched in 1947. From the beginning it has had two chief aims. One has been to provide a world view of outstanding achievement in the spheres of the realistic, documentary, and experimental films by showing the best from as many countries as possible. The other has been to create an opportunity for like-minded film-makers to meet, see each other's work, and exchange ideas in an atmosphere we hoped would be stimulating. A capital city with the best in opera, music, drama, ballet and art on show for the enjoyment of half a million visitors from all over the world: this has been the enlivening setting in which the films have been seen and assessed.

Looking back on the experience of four years I feel that the Festival has some sizeable achievement to record. It has introduced to this country hundreds of realist and experimental films which might otherwise not have been seen here. It has made known, or better known, the work of foreign directors with something distinctively individual to bring to the cinema. It has helped to make the reputation of films which have had nothing but the integrity of their directors' approach to commend them to the cinema-going public. It has given the small film-making countries a chance to show their work on a festive occasion. And it has kept the documentary idea before a great international audience.

What it has meant to the film-makers has been well expressed by one of them, Stephen Ackroyd: "The significance of the Edinburgh Documentary Festival does not lie only in the fact that here we are able to study, to exchange experiences, and to learn from the work of fellow documentary film-makers from many countries; it is also the fact that here, beside the arts of Music and Drama, Documentary stands as a medium on its own. Here, seen by an international audience, is the work of men and women from all over the world who strive, like ourselves, to express in film the factual realities of our time. It is in this realisation of the truly international character of the Documentary idea that the real significance of the Edinburgh Film Festival lies, and which makes this event one of the most exciting and stimulating of experiences".

Films alone do not make a festival; and from the beginning Edinburgh has taken its character as much from the film-makers it has attracted as from the programmes. John Grierson flew from his UNESCO post in Paris to open the first Festival. Sir Michael Balcon, whose Ealing films have been deeply influenced by the realist tradition in film-making, opened the second and paid a tribute to the service documentary has rendered the feature film. The third Festival brought together three men whose association in the early 'thirties laid the foundation for the movement in this country: Robert Flaherty, Sir Stephen Tallents, and Grierson. It was a memorable occasion.

I would not attempt, of course, a list of all those who have attended the Festival over its first four years. Naturally the British documentary movement has been well represented and Basil Wright, Harry Watt, Arthur



Elton, Paul Rotha and Edgar Anstey have been familiar figures at Film House, the Festival's organising centre. Sir Henry French for the British Film Producers' Association, Denis Forman for the British Film Institute, Roger Manvell for the British Film Academy and John Maddison for the Central Office of Information have been there to emphasise the practical and valuable support of their respective organisations. Ian Dalrymple and Jack Lee were present when *The Wooden Horse* opened the 1950 Festival and Herbert Marshall was present when his *Tinker* was successfully launched.

Of the overseas countries Denmark, with its school of lively young directors, has always been well represented. Yugoslavia has supported the Festival strongly from the outset and in 1950 sent a delegation headed by Gustav Gavrin, director of *YOUTH Railway* and *The Red Flower*. Christian Tenow, Arne Sucksdorff's producer, was present in 1949 to see two of the young Swedish director's films given their *première*—*A Divided World* and *The Open Road*. Canada has been represented at the Festival by Ross McLean, James Beveridge, and Norman McLaren, Australia by John Heyer and Professor A. K. Stout, and Malaya by Harry Govan. Paul Zils was present to introduce his feature film, *Our India*. In 1950 the United States demonstrated its awakened interest in the Festival by sending a representative direct from the State Department in Washington, Walter Evans.

If it is not easy to mention all the film-makers who have attended the Festival, it is even more difficult to give an impression of the films shown over four years. It is important at the outset to correct the impression that only short films are shown in Edinburgh. "The creative treatment of actuality" is a method of film-making, not a measuring tape. Films of all lengths, from shorts to features, have been shown. What matters is the approach, not the footage.

At the first Festival, for example, the feature films included Georges Rouquier's *Farrebique* and Roberto Rossellini's *Paisa* and these helped notably to set a style and a standard for the event. Paul Rotha's food film, *The World is Rich*, and Humphrey Jennings' drama of new methods in the coal mines, *The Cumberland Story*, represented the documentary of social purpose. *Henri Matisse* started the flow of art films which has become a flood. The first Festival is also notable for having introduced to Britain the work of Arne Sucksdorff the brilliant young Swedish director, and for having reflected the growth of the documentary film movement in Denmark.

The first Festival was a brave experiment, with a certain amount of muddle and makeshift. The second was a much more ambitious occasion, with more films, more performances, more countries represented and more interest. Robert Flaherty, deeply interested from the first in the Festival, sent his *Louisiana Story* to have its world *première* in Edinburgh—a gesture both typical and generous. A more modest but still undoubted success was registered by *The Quiet One*—a success which led to the film being "blown up" and shown a year later on 35 mm. at other festivals in Europe. Nicole Védres sent her brilliantly witty compilation *Paris 1900* and Rossellini his grim study of post-war Berlin, *Germany, Year Zero*.

By the third year the character and reputation of the Edinburgh Festival were established and the flow of films became a torrent embarrassing in volume. It posed a difficult problem of selection. If quality alone were to be the criterion, the entries of some of the smaller countries new to film-making would be excluded and the world survey of documentary presented at the Festival would be restricted. On the other hand, it is too much to expect anyone to see and appreciate nearly three hundred films in three weeks. In 1949 there were too many films; but those with strong constitutions could see a range of cinema such as has rarely been available in one place at one time.

Russia sent half a dozen of her newest films, including *Michurin* and *V. I. Lenin*, while other contributions from beyond the Iron Curtain included *The Last Stage* from Poland, *Somewhere in Europe* from Hungary, and *The Joy of Life* from Czechoslovakia. The Scandinavian countries were again represented in force, with *A Handful of Rice* from Sweden, *The Red Meadows* from Denmark, and *Englandsfarere* from Norway. *Sofka* revealed the progress being made in Yugoslavia. Italy offered the stimulating analysis of her art films and Rossellini was again represented, by Anna Magnani in *The Miracle*. A strong entry from Germany was headed by *Berliner Ballade*. The French films drew poetry from strange places in *Aubervilliers* and *Le Sang des Bêtes* and gaiety from the antics of a village postman in *Jour de Fête*.

Outside Europe, the chief item of note was the growing interest being taken in the Festival in the Western hemisphere. The United States sent *The Photographer*, an account of the work of Edward Weston, and *Feeling All Right*, a Southern social problem treated in moving terms. Canada, as always, was strongly represented by work of solid merit. The Argentine sent a feature film, *Su Major Alumno*, while *That All May Learn* offered a glimpse of what film-makers were doing in Mexico. John Heyer showed his *The Valley is Ours* and there were contributions from India, South Africa and New Zealand.

By the time the fourth Festival was held, a great many of the organisational problems had been solved. There is a stage in the running of a film Festival when it seems that everything and everyone are contriving to make life difficult: films go amissing, distributors withhold permission, unsubtitled copies are delivered, visiting producers are delayed, commentators turn temperamental, and microphones develop squeaks. In 1950, if this stage were reached, it went unnoticed because the organisation was resilient enough to take all the blows which seem inseparable from a Festival. For this increasingly smooth working, much credit is due to the active co-operation of the British Film Institute, the British Film Academy, the Association of Specialised Film Producers, the Central Office of Information, the Scientific Film Association and the many other film bodies supporting the Festival.

For the first time a British feature film, *The Wooden Horse*, was chosen to open the Festival and over the programmes the British contribution was stronger than in previous years. *The Undefeated* proved that there was still fire and force in the documentary idea. *Scrapbook for 1933* was as skilful a piece of compilation as anything from overseas in the same style and *West of England*

(continued on page 64)



# ALL WARDOUR STREET TO A LIVER FLUKE

John Maddison

IN NO COUNTRY have the techniques and the art of cinematography been more variously or more notably applied to the service of science than in Britain. The French have more than once shown greater inventiveness and sense of form; the Germans are again displaying their remarkable technical and photographic skill; and the Russians have sent to Western countries one or two outstanding examples (from what, one is told, is a considerable output) of the film as a means of popularising science. But if we consider all the possibilities of movie in this field—as a research tool, as an expository aid and as a unique medium for interpreting the problems of science and stimulating wonder in, and the enjoyment of, natural phenomena—the total achievement of British scientific cinematographers is surely an impressive one. It is necessary to insist on this, because, confronted by it, the run of our film critics seem to maintain a conspiracy of silence; exactly as if, in the world of letters, our book critics were to lead us to believe that the immense, mainly impermanent, and often downright meretricious output of the fiction publishers was the only interesting manifestation of the desire for self-expression in print. A recent incident illustrates the prevailing attitude of mind: when the news came a few months ago that a British scientific film (on the liver fluke) had won a first prize at the Venice international competition, one of the most respected of our film critics commented in her weekly article in accents of disturbed and almost cynical raillery. And yet, in the Festival nostalgia of a hundred years hence, they will perhaps look back on our scientific films as Britain's most significant contribution to the progress of cinema to-day. To have helped demonstrate, along with a handful of technicians in other countries, that the film really is a new currency of expression, able to serve the whole range of human thought and feeling, may turn out to be the important event historically in our film-making in the mid-twentieth century.

A noteworthy strand in our scientific film-making rests on an older tradition—that of the direct observation of bird, plant and animal life, going back through the “natural historians” of the Victorian age to Parson Gilbert White two hundred years ago. The pioneer here was the late Percy Smith, one of Nature's inspired *bricoleurs*. In the opening of the present century, Smith realised that the motion picture camera gave the enquirer an entirely novel sort of control over the time-scale for both analysing and synthesising visually the movement of living things. To pursue this idea, he gave up a Government clerkship and, with his own hands, devised in 1908 the equipment for making his botanical study, using speeded-up motion, *The Birth of Flowers*. It was the first of many such films in which the miracle of growth appears on the screen with a strange and unaccustomed restlessness, seeds and bulbs bursting their bonds, leaves and flowers pushing upwards to the sunlight, roots and tendrils stretching out and waving like plumes. Cavalcanti, in his anthology *Film and Reality*, has picked out one of the loveliest of these—the humble dandelion displaying a rare and splendid “lyricism” beneath the impulse of life. Smith was also—and his work as a whole here remains unequalled—the best of our exponents of cine-micrography, the linking of film-camera and microscope. Between the two World Wars, he worked with the team which, under Bruce Wolfe, produced the famous “Secrets of Nature” (later “Secrets of Life”) series and a long list of biology and zoology teaching films for the Gaumont-British Instructional Company. This group included, at one time or another, Mary Field, who went on to make

children's films, Edgar Chance, an ornithologist whose *The Cuckoo's Secret*, was the first of the “Secrets of Nature,” and Oliver Pike, another scientific film pioneer; as long ago as 1908 Pike went to St. Kilda with his movie camera to record the bird life there. The work of these English naturalists of the cinema is familiar enough nowadays, but it continues to give pleasure, is never *vieux jeu*. And the tradition remains a lively one, as certain of the British films shown at the 1950 International Scientific Film Congress in Florence testified. They included *Red Spider*, one of a series of ten colour films on fruit pests which J. V. Durden, an old colleague of Smith's, has directed for the Shell Company—in it the many-legged larvae moving across the blue screen provide a strange spectacle, a “curiosity” of the cinema; *Introduction to the Frog*, a school film made by T. James for Gaumont-British Instructional—this film would have delighted Percy Smith had he been alive to-day, though it employs one technique (phase-contrast microscopy) not available to him; and finally *Amphibians and Reptiles*, the second of two silent films (this one is in colour, the first—*The Tarsier*—was in black-and-white) made by Douglas Fisher at the London Zoo.

The images in Smith's films (many of them were designed for the entertainment cinemas) were observed, selected and put together with no small skill in narrative construction. But even in those cases where the camera has been no more than a researcher's tool, an animated laboratory notebook, so to speak, the results have sometimes been surprisingly dramatic, evoking a little of the kind of wonder Darwin may have felt when, as he tells us, “the thought of the eye made me cold all over”. The work on cancer cells which R. G. Canti began at St. Bartholomew's Hospital thirty years ago using slow-motion and the camera-microscope, was of this order. Of its effect on the spectator with some knowledge of its implications, Sir Charles Sherrington has written: “(In Canti's films) where life's movements are speeded-up perhaps a hundred times, they (the cancer cells) seem almost audible as they jostle past and push through the ‘quieter’ normal cells. They seem possessed by a kind of frenzy, senseless because, although imbued with prodigious and reproductive energy. . . they and what they build are planless”. In recent years, Arthur Hughes at the Strangeways Laboratory in Cambridge has been using regularly Canti's techniques, and others such as microscopy with phase contrast and polarised light, to study the immensely complex nature of living protoplasm. The opposite effect in time—slow-motion—has been used to investigate a great range of phenomena—the flight of locusts, the study of human hands and of machines in the factory, upsurge in electric valves, the movement of shuttles, a watch escapement and the performance of fuel atomisers. Frequently, in such records, as the images captured at a speed of 3000 to the second are shown at the projector's normal gait of 24 a second, the visual patterns have been as dreamlike and unexpected as those achieved by the makers of “abstract” films. Other techniques have produced their own matrices of strangeness; the Kodak Laboratories' impeccable *Rail and Chair*, showing in colour the moving stresses in a photo-elastic model of a railway chair seen through the polariscope, might have come from the hand of Norman McLaren or Len Lye.

Our sense of wonder is not, of course, an unlimited one—the mind, it has been observed, grows tired. We cannot go on endlessly contemplating the camera's revelations with the awe of a Pascal, as he reflects on the silence of infinite space.



Intelligence, even at its humbler levels, wishes to understand, and to systematise. A strong element in our scientific film-making has been its ability to assimilate these "marvels" of specialised cinematography into a larger narrative flow. Derek Stewart's high-speed records of fuel atomisers were impressive enough as simple research documents, but they were if anything still more attractive when placed into the structure, lucid and at times amusing, of the completed Shell educational film, *Atomisation*.

But given all the possibilities of movie, native good sense and restraint in the use of the medium have (it must be confessed) sometimes gone too far. It is interesting to compare the Admiralty Research film *Report from the Sea-Bed*, and the French *Paysages du Silence*. Both are made from the same kind of under-water material. The first is a competent and entirely satisfactory descriptive piece; the second is, unashamedly and enchantingly, a film-poem. Our talents, for the moment, do not seem to run that way. But it is to their credit that our film-men have been content to bestow their craftsmanship—and it is as high as any in the world—on modest little films for the schoolroom, the village hall and the factory canteen. They have been ready to experiment within the necessarily limited range of the teaching film, in a period when the word "didactic" is a term of reproach. Here they have often been flexible and adventurous in their approach to sound and image and composition. Among earlier experiments, one remembers especially the essays in screen mathematics carried out before the War by Robert Fairthorne, with the help of Brian Salt. One of Fairthorne's films, now over twelve years old, on the behaviour of a well-known differential equation as it would appear on a purely visually operated analyser, shows how the cinema can quicken the spirit of exploration characterising the best of the learning that goes on in our Sixth Forms; even for the uncomprehending, the film has its own intrinsic beauty. More recent experiments on a different level have been those made in the G.B.I. films *Latitude and Longitude* and *Night and Day*; in them, Margaret Simpson attempts to introduce a series of abstract concepts to the minds of younger students through colour animation and the use of models. In yet another field, the Realist Film Unit produced for Imperial Chemical Industries between 1943 and 1948 their series of thirteen films called "The Technique of Anaesthesia". These films cover a whole branch of the medical curriculum. Because of their clarity and grace of composition, and their skill in combining drawn sequences and actuality, they set a new standard for the science teaching film. (Realist have now almost completed a further series of six films on Cancer for the Ministry of Health, which will be available to audiences of G.P.s. later in the year.) Not all of the films made in the past eight years by the same unit for teaching simple health principles to parents have maintained the consistently high quality of "The Technique of Anaesthesia", but the fame of two of them at least, *Your Children's Eyes* and *Your Children and You*, has gone round the world. In this latter film, and in their other Ministry of Education film on child psychology, *Children Learning by Experience*, there is more humanity and shrewdness of observation than may be found in a score of average feature films.

In the nineteen-thirties, what Grierson has called "the battle for authenticity" was being fought by the school of cinema associated with his name; from it stemmed the documentary of science in its economic and social aspects. Taking the sober, but often deeply disturbing pages of the reports made by national experts and commissions, this group fashioned interpretations that were an entirely new phenomenon in the cinema—often dynamic, sometimes rough-hewn, but never merely rhetorical or polemic. The makers were not "scientists" in the narrow sense, but those professional scientists who were not afraid of the warmth of humanism coming in through their laboratory windows co-operated with them freely. In particular, Sir John Boyd-Orr accepted the

challenge of Edgar Anstey's *Enough to Eat*—made in 1936 with the patronage of the Gas Council—to carry the findings of nutritional science to a mass audience. *Enough to Eat* was no great shakes as "film art" (it never set out to be), but it lit the understanding and kindled the heart—qualities which have their own power to transmute form. In 1943, in *World of Plenty*, Rotha brought to the same theme, but on the international scale, a much greater technical polish and the range of his maturity as an artist. *World of Plenty* was probably the most courageous film to be made during the War, especially so for an "official film"; again it owed much to the spirit of Boyd-Orr, and, one has gathered since, to the imaginative persistence of Lord Woolton. Its impact as cinema (and that of Rotha's post-war film on F.A.O., *The World is Rich*), was often very considerable indeed.

From another member of the group, Arthur Elton, came the first important demonstration of the film's capacity for synthesis and historical sweep—*Transfer of Power*, on the evolution of the toothed wheel (1939). Produced by Elton, it was directed by Geoffrey Bell, whose principal achievement came later with *Personnel Selection—Officers*, a feature-length study for the War Office of scientific methods of personality-assessment. Elton was the group's first pamphleteer (with *Housing Problems*, 1935 but his special contribution derives more from his wide-ranging interest in the development of technology (he is, among other things, an authority on railways). *Transfer of Power* reflects his guiding passion, as does *Cornish Engine* (1949), a detailed and lovingly authentic essay in industrial history. Both are Shell films, and to mention Shell is always to think of Elton. Over the past fifteen years or so, he has worked to build up the Shell Film Unit. This team of craftsmen has given us the long series of Shell applied science and engineering films, whose quality is now an accepted yardstick of excellence in this field. Elton is also the most significant figure in the British scientific film "movement". Through his inspiration, as much as anyone's, the Scientific Film Association was created in 1943. The S.F.A. is a characteristically British voluntary grouping of producers and "consumers" (audiences), and its influence is steadily widening.

Two recent scientific documentaries (and the use of this vexatiously wide term is justified here) have yielded proof of the suppleness of the English gift for screen exposition. Both are, in different ways, teaching films. The first, *Liver Fluke in Great Britain*, was made by John Shearman. In spite of its forbidding title, this film for farmers is a comely piece of cinema prose; good husbandry and its relation to modern science are set against the background of international research. The other, Derek Mayne's *Atomic Physics*, a Gaumont-British film for schools and universities in five chapters, traces the momentous and highly complex story of nuclear research from its origins in Dalton's new "Philosophy of Chemistry" to Hiroshima and beyond. It is the longest and most richly-loaded science-teaching film yet made, but it wears its massiveness and its refinements of speculation and experiment as lightly as was humanly possible. An opportunity will be given to the public of seeing *Atomic Physics* again at the cinema of the Festival Exhibition of Science in South Kensington.

Even in a festive salute like this, it would be dishonest to leave the impression that, where these scientific films are concerned, everything in the garden is lovely. Some of them are, of course, pretty uninspired. But one never finds in them the pretentiousness and awful banality of some of the ordinary fiction-films. They are almost always intelligently and skilfully made by men and women (mainly young ones) with a genuine passion for the job. These scientific films, down to the most modest of them, each presents its own problems of style, judgment, and aesthetics generally. What perhaps they most need (and this is true of the "non-theatrical" cinema generally) is much greater public discussion of the responsible but completely independent kind to be found in the book, radio and film columns of our better dailies and weeklies.



# Points of Reference

## FEATURE FILM STUDIOS IN BRITAIN

*There are 32 film studios in Britain, including one in Manchester: half of these are small studios, with 1-3 sound stages, owned by independent companies. The rest are owned by the J. Arthur Rank Organisation (which controls its own distribution company, General Film Distributors), Sir Alexander Korda's London Films (which is associated with the distributors, British Lion Film Corporation), the Associated British Picture Corporation (which controls its own distribution company, Associated British-Pathé) and by American companies. The following list covers the main studios.*

AMALGAMATED STUDIOS, Elstree, Herts. Owned by M.G.M.-British. 7 sound stages.  
ASSOCIATED BRITISH STUDIOS, Elstree. Owned by Associated British-Pathé group. 8 sound stages.  
BRAY STUDIOS, Down Place, Maidenhead Road, Bray. Owned by Exclusive Films. 1 sound stage.  
BRITISH NATIONAL STUDIOS, Elstree. Owned by British Lion Production Assets and London Films. 4 sound stages.  
CARLTON HILL STUDIOS, London, N.W.8. Independent: owned by Ernest G. Roy. 1 sound stage.  
DENHAM STUDIOS, Middlesex. Owned by the J. Arthur Rank Organisation. 7 sound stages.  
EALING STUDIOS, London, W.5. Owned by Ealing Studios, an independent production company working in association with the J. Arthur Rank Organisation, and releasing through G.F.D. 4 sound stages.  
GATE STUDIOS, Elstree. Owned by the J. Arthur Rank Organisation. 2 sound stages.  
LONDON FILM STUDIO, Isleworth. Owned by British Lion Studio Co. 3 sound stages.  
LONDON STUDIOS, Shepperton, Middlesex. Owned by British Lion Studio Co. 5 sound stages.  
MANCHESTER STUDIOS, Rusholme. Independent: owned by John E. Blakeley. 2 sound stages.  
NETTLEFOLD STUDIOS, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey. Independent: owned by Ernest G. Roy. 3 sound stages.  
PINWOOD STUDIOS, Iver, Bucks. Owned by the J. Arthur Rank Organisation. 5 sound stages.  
RIVERSIDE STUDIOS, Hammersmith. Owned by Alliance Film Studios (Independent). 2 sound stages.  
SOUTHALL STUDIOS, Middlesex. Owned by Alliance Film Studios (Independent), and leased to the Film Finance Corporation for its "Third Group" productions. 1 sound stage.  
TEDDINGTON STUDIOS, Middlesex. Owned by Warner Brothers. 2 sound stages.  
TWICKENHAM STUDIOS, Middlesex. Owned by Alliance Film Studios (Independent). 1 sound stage.  
WELWYN STUDIOS, Herts. Owned by Associated British-Pathé group. 3 sound stages.  
WEMBLEY STUDIOS, Middlesex. Owned by 20th Century-Fox, but not at present in use. 1 sound stage.

## OTHER STUDIOS

BEACONSFIELD STUDIOS, Bucks. Leased to the Crown Film Unit. (Government Film Production) by British Lion Film Corporation. 1 sound stage.  
MERTON PARK STUDIOS, London, S.W.19. Owned by Film Producers Guild (association of companies mainly specialising in short films, occasionally producing small-scale feature films). 2 sound stages.  
PATHE STUDIOS, Wardour Street, London, W.1. Owned by Associated British-Pathé group, and used by the Pathé Documentary Unit. 1 sound stage.

## BRITISH PRODUCTION COMPANIES

### Feature Films

*This list covers the main companies at present actively engaged in British film production*

A.C.T. FILMS, LTD., 32 Victoria Street, S.W.1.  
ANGEL PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Nascreno House, Soho Square, W.1.  
ANGLOFILM, LTD., 197 Wardour Street, W.1. (Managing Director: Mario Zampi).  
ASSOCIATED BRITISH PICTURE CORPORATION, LTD., Elstree Studios, Boreham Wood, Herts.  
JOHN E. BLAKELEY PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Manchester Film Studios, Rusholme.  
BRITISH LION STUDIO Co. LTD., Shepperton, Middlesex.  
BUTCHER'S FILM SERVICE, LTD., 175 Wardour Street, W.1.  
CHARTER FILM PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 21 Grosvenor Street, W.1. (Producer-Directors: John Boulting, Roy Boulting.)  
COLUMBIA BRITISH PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 139 Wardour Street, W.1.  
CONQUEST PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 25 Montagu Square, W.1. (Directors: Val Guest, Yolande Donlan, Reginald Beckwith.)  
CONSTELLATION FILMS, LTD., 5 Hanover Street, W.1. (Chairman: Anthony Havelock-Allan.)  
CORONADO PRODUCTION (ENGLAND), LTD., 13 Wigmore Street, W.1.  
EALING STUDIOS, LTD., Ealing Green, W.5.  
ELVEY GARTSIDE PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 1 Princes Street, W.1.  
EXCELSIOR FILM PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Park Lane W.1. (Executive Producer: Marcel Hellmann.)  
EXCLUSIVE FILMS, LTD., 113 Wardour Street, W.1.  
GAINSBOROUGH PICTURES (1928) LTD., Pinewood Studios, Iver Heath, Bucks.  
GRAND NATIONAL FILMS, LTD., 113 Wardour Street, W.1.  
IMPERADIO PICTURES, LTD., 2-4 Dean Street, W.1. (Executive producer-director: Herbert Wilcox; Co-producer: Anna Neagle.)  
INDEPENDENT SOVEREIGN FILMS LTD., 17-18 Dover Street, W.1.  
INTERNATIONAL SCREENPLAYS, LTD., 45 Clarges Street, W.1. (Producer: Anatole de Grunwald.)  
ANTHONY KIMMINS PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 9 Cavendish Square, W.1.  
LAUNDER-GILLIAT PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 146 Piccadilly, W.1.  
DAVID LEAN PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 9 Cavendish Square, W.1.  
COLIN LESSLIE PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Canada House, 4-5 Norfolk Street, W.C.2.  
JAY LEWIS PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Hammer House, 113 Wardour Street, W.1.  
"THE MAYFLOWER" PICTURES CORPORATION, LTD., 27 Soho Square, W.1.  
LONDON FILM PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 146 Piccadilly, W.1.  
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER BRITISH STUDIOS, LTD., 1 Belgrave Place, S.W.1.  
BERNARD MILES PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 115 Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.  
NETTLEFOLD FILMS, LTD., 22 Soho Square, W.1.  
PARAMOUNT BRITISH PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Plaza Theatre Offices, Jermyn Street, S.W.1.  
PASCAL FILM PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 90 Regent Street, W.1.  
PENNANT PICTURE PRODUCTIONS, LTD., The Manor, Davies Street, Berkeley Square, W.1.  
PILGRIM PICTURES, LTD., 1 Hanover Square, W.1. (Managing director: F. del Giudice.)  
PINNACLE PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 60 Wardour Street, W.1.  
POWELL AND PRESSBURGER PRODUCTIONS (VEGA PRODUCTIONS), LTD., 146 Piccadilly, W.1.  
J. ARTHUR RANK PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 38 South Street, W.1.  
RENOWN PICTURES CORPORATION, LTD., 111A Wardour Street, W.1.  
R.K.O.-WALT DISNEY BRITISH PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 119 Wardour Street, W.1.  
ROMULUS FILM, LTD., Nascreno House, 27-28 Soho Square, W.1.  
SIRIUS PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Nascreno House, 27-28 Soho Square, W.1. (Directors: Monja Danischewsky, Henry Cornelius.)  
TRANSATLANTIC PICTURES CORPORATION, LTD., 36 Golden Square, W.1. (Directors: Sidney Bernstein, Alfred Hitchcock.)  
TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 31-32 Soho Square, W.1.  
TWO CITIES FILMS, LTD., 15 Hanover Square, W.1.



UNITED ARTISTS CORPORATION, LTD., Film House, Wardour Street, W.1.  
 VIC FILMS, LTD., 1 Princes Street, Cavendish Square, W.1.  
 WARNER BROS. FIRST NATIONAL PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex.  
 WESSEX FILM PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 144 Piccadilly, W.1.  
 ZELSTRO PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Queen's House, Leicester Square, W.1.

## DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES

*This list covers the main distribution companies in Great Britain*

ADELPHI FILMS, LTD., 187 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 ARCHWAY FILM DISTRIBUTORS, 18 Rupert Street, W.1. (Continental Films.)  
 ASSOCIATED BRITISH-PATHE, LTD., Film House, Wardour Street, W.1.  
 ASSOCIATED BRITISH FILM DISTRIBUTORS, 169 Oxford Street, W.1.  
 BLUE RIBBON FILMS, LTD., 50 Bryanston Street, W.1. (Continental Films.)  
 BRITISH LION FILM CORPORATION, LTD., 76 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 BUTCHER'S FILM SERVICE, LTD., 175 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 COLUMBIA PICTURES CORPORATION, LTD., 139 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 EQUITY BRITISH FILMS, LTD., 26 St. Anne's Court, W.1.  
 EROS DISTRIBUTORS, LTD., 111 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 EXCLUSIVE FILMS, LTD., 113 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 FILMS DE FRANCE, LTD., 144 Piccadilly, S.W.1. (Continental Films.)  
 FILM TRADERS, LTD., 26-27 D'Arblay Street, W.1. (Continental Films.)  
 G.C.T. (DISTRIBUTORS), LTD., 199 Wardour Street, W.1. (Continental Films.)  
 GENERAL FILM DISTRIBUTORS, LTD., 127 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 GRAND NATIONAL PICTURES, LTD., 113 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 INDEPENDENT FILM DISTRIBUTORS, LTD., 27 Soho Square, W.1.  
 INTERNATIONAL FILM DISTRIBUTORS, LTD., 167 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER PICTURES, LTD., 19 Tower Street, W.1.  
 MONARCH FILM CORPORATION, LTD., Morris House, Jermyn Street, S.W.1.  
 NEW REALM PICTURES, LTD., Queens House, Leicester Square, W.C.2.  
 PARAMOUNT FILM SERVICE, LTD., 162 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 RENOWN PICTURES CORPORATION, LTD., 54/58 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 REPUBLIC INTERNATIONAL PICTURES INC., 38 Soho Square, W.1.  
 R.K.O.-RADIO PICTURES, LTD., 2 Dean Street, W.1.  
 TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX FILM COMPANY, LTD., 31-32 Soho Square, W.1.  
 UNITED ARTISTS CORPORATION, LTD., Film House, Wardour Street, W.1.  
 WARNER BROTHERS PICTURES LTD., Warner House, Wardour Street, W.1.

## LEADING CINEMA CIRCUITS

ASSOCIATED BRITISH CINEMAS, LTD., 30 Golden Square, W.1. (Approx. 450 cinemas.)  
 BOSTOCK CINEMA CIRCUIT, 195 Norwich Road, Ipswich. (Approx. 20 cinemas.)  
 CALEDONIAN ASSOCIATED CINEMAS, LTD., Inverness, Scotland. (Approx. 60 cinemas.)  
 CAPITAL & PROVINCIAL NEWS THEATRES, LTD., 100 Baker Street, W.1. (Approx. 20 cinemas.)  
 CLIFTON CIRCUIT, Princes Chambers, 6 Corporation Street, Birmingham 2. (Approx. 30 cinemas.)  
 ECKART CIRCUIT (STAR CINEMAS), 15 Wellington Street, Leeds. (Approx. 55 cinemas.)  
 EMERY CINEMA CIRCUIT, 26 Cross Street, Manchester. (Approx. 35 cinemas.)  
 ESSOLDO CIRCUIT, LTD., 42 Westgate Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne. (Approx. 100 cinemas.)

GAUMONT BRITISH PICTURE CORPORATION, LTD., New Gallery House, London, W.1. (Approx. 250 cinemas.)  
 GRANADA THEATRES, LTD., 36 Golden Square, W.1. (Approx. 55 cinemas.)  
 SIR ALEXANDER B. KING CIRCUIT, 190 West Regent Street, Glasgow. (Approx. 90 cinemas.)  
 H. D. MOORHOUSE CIRCUIT, Imperial Buildings, 7 Oxford Road, Manchester. (Approx. 50 cinemas.)  
 ODEON THEATRES, LTD., Albion House, New Oxford Street, W.1. (Approx. 320 cinemas.)  
 PARAMOUNT P.T., LTD., Clive Buildings, Welshpool, Mon. (Approx. 25 cinemas.)  
 SHIPMAN & KING CIRCUIT, Wellington House, 125 Strand, W.C.2. (Approx. 45 cinemas.)  
 S.M. ASSOCIATED CINEMAS, LTD., Morris House, Jermyn Street, S.W.1. (Approx. 70 cinemas.)  
 UNITED ENTERTAINMENTS, LTD., Whitefriars House, Friar Lane, Nottingham. (Approx. 25 cinemas.)

NOTE.—The total number of cinemas in the United Kingdom is about 4,800. The Odeon and Gaumont circuits together account for approximately 570 of these, the Associated British circuit for approximately 450. There are more than 120 independent circuits, varying from 10-90 cinemas in size.

The Odeon and Gaumont circuits exhibit most of the American films made by 20th Century-Fox, R.K.O.-Radio, Columbia Pictures, Paramount Pictures and Universal-International, which are released through G.F.D. Most films from Warner Bros. and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer are distributed on the A.B.C. circuit.

## Documentary Films

*This list covers the main companies at present actively engaged in documentary and short film production*

ANGLO-SCOTTISH PICTURES, LTD., London Film Studios, Shepperton.  
 BASIC FILMS, LTD., 18 Soho Square, W.1.  
 BRITISH TRANSPORT COMMISSION, 5 Petty France, London, S.W.1.  
 DATA FILM UNIT, 21 Soho Square, W.1.  
 EDITORIAL FILM PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Cine House, 8 St. Anne's Court, W.1.  
 FILM CENTRE, 167 Tottenham Court Road, W.1.  
 G.B. INSTRUCTIONAL, LTD., Albion House, 59 New Oxford Street, W.1.  
 GREENPARK PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Guild House, Upper St. Martins Lane, W.2.  
 HALAS & BATCHELOR CARTOON FILMS, LTD., 10A Soho Square, W.1.  
 I.C.I. FILM PRODUCTIONS, LTD., 42 Hertford Street, W.1.  
 INTERNATIONAL REALIST, LTD., 9 Great Chapel Street, W.1.  
 W. N. LARKINS & CO., LTD., 51 Charles Street, W.1.  
 MERLIN FILM COMPANY, LTD., 203 Clapham Park Road, S.W.4.  
 MERTON PARK STUDIOS, LTD., 269 Kingston Road, S.W.19.  
 PATHE PICTURES, LTD., Film House, Wardour Street, W.1.  
 PUBLIC RELATIONSHIP FILMS, LTD., 29 Whitehall, S.W.1.  
 RAYANT PICTURES, LTD., 43 Chandos Place, W.C.2.  
 SEVEN LEAGUE PRODUCTIONS, LTD., Kent House, 87 Regent Street, W.1.  
 SHELL FILM UNIT, Room 101, Shell Mex House, Strand, W.C.2.  
 SIGNAL FILMS, LTD., Little St. Annes, Bakeham Lane, Egham, Surrey.  
 WORLD WIDE PICTURES, LTD., 10A Soho Square, W.1.

## Newsreel Companies

BRITISH MOVIE-TONE, LTD., 22 Soho Square, W.1.  
 BRITISH PARAMOUNT NEWS, 10 School Road, N.W.10.  
 GAUMONT BRITISH NEWS, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1.  
 PATHE NEWS, 103-109 Wardour Street, W.1.  
 UNIVERSAL NEWS, 127-133 Wardour Street, W.1.



## FILM ORGANIZATIONS

ASSOCIATION OF CINEMATOGRAPH AND ALLIED TECHNICIANS, 2 Soho Square, W.1. The recognised trade union for all film technicians.

ASSOCIATION OF SHORT FILM PRODUCERS, 34 Soho Square, W.1. The leading producers of short films are members of this organization.

ASSOCIATION OF SPECIALISED FILM PRODUCERS, LTD., 3 Portman Chambers, Baker St., W.1. Represents and advises on all kinds of short film production, including advertising, industrial, instructional, documentary and entertainment.

BRITISH ACTORS' EQUITY ASSOCIATION, 56 Kingsway, W.C.2. The recognised trade union for all actors and actresses.

BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CENSORS, 3 Soho Square, W.1.

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH FILM CORPORATION LTD., 49 Mount Street, W.1. The export section of the British Film Producers' Association.

BRITISH FILM ACADEMY, 117 Piccadilly, W.1. Founded in 1946 by film-makers in Great Britain, to foster creative film-making in this country, to develop a library and record material, sponsor research, and make annual awards in all fields of film-making.

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE, 164 Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2. The Institute exists to promote the appreciation and study of the film: among its activities is the operation of the NATIONAL FILM LIBRARY, an archive containing films of historical and artistic importance.

BRITISH FILM PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION, 49 Mount Street, W.1. Membership of the Association, which is concerned with all matters affecting film production and to promote British film production, is open to all film producers, studio owners and laboratories in this country.

BRITISH KINEMATOGRAPH SOCIETY, 2 Dean Street, W.1.

CINEMA MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION, 1 Hamilton Road, W.5.

CINEMATOGRAPH EXHIBITORS' ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND, 164 Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.

CINEMATOGRAPH TRADE BENEVOLENT FUND, Queens House, Leicester Square, W.C.2.

FEDERATION OF DOCUMENTARY FILM UNITS, 2 Soho Square, W.1.

FEDERATION OF FILM SOCIETIES (England and Wales), 54 Lodore Road, Bradford, Yorks.

FEDERATION OF SCOTTISH FILM SOCIETIES, Film House, Hill Street, Edinburgh 2.

FILM ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION, 15 Kingly Court, Beak Street, W.1. Represents small-part players and crowd artists.

FILM INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES COUNCIL, 2 Soho Square, W.1. The federation of all film Trade Unions.

FILM LABORATORY ASSOCIATION, Queens House, Leicester Square, W.C.2.

KINEMATOGRAPH RENTERS' SOCIETY LTD., 30 Old Compton Street, W.1. Represents the major distribution companies in Britain.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THEATRICAL & KINE EMPLOYEES, 17 Waterloo Place, S.W.1.

NEWS AND SPECIALISED THEATRE ASSOCIATION, 31 Dover Street, W.1.

NEWSREEL ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND, Queens House, Leicester Square, W.1.

ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY, 16 Princes Gate, S.W.7.

SCIENTIFIC FILM ASSOCIATION, 4 Great Russell Street, W.C.2.

SCOTTISH FILM COUNCIL, 16-17 Woodside Terrace, Glasgow, C.3.

SCREENWRITERS' ASSOCIATION, 7 Deanery Street, W.1.

## GOVERNMENT FILM ORGANIZATIONS

CENTRAL FILM LIBRARY, Imperial Institute, S.W.1. The main documentary film library.

CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION, 83 Baker Street, W.1. The consultant for films sponsored by Government Departments.

CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS COUNCIL, Board of Trade, Millbank, London. A council, composed of 7 independent and 15 trade members, which submits an annual report on the film industry to Parliament.

NATIONAL FILM PRODUCTION COUNCIL. Board of Trade, Millbank. A council, composed of representatives of producers and trade unions, which considers production affairs.

NATIONAL FILM FINANCE CORPORATION, 28 Soho Square, W.1. Set up in April 1949, this Corporation makes loans from monies provided by Parliament to assist production in cases where finance "cannot be obtained on reasonable terms from an appropriate source". To date the Corporation has provided finances for about 100 films.

GOVERNMENT CINEMATOGRAPH ADVISER, H.M. Stationery Office, Queen Anne's Chambers, 28 Broadway, S.W.1. Advises Government departments on all film matters except publicity pictures.

FILM SELECTION COMMITTEE. Board of Trade, Millbank. A Committee responsible for recommending first feature bookings on the 3 major circuits for independently produced British films.

SCOTTISH CENTRAL FILM LIBRARY, 16 Woodside Terrace, Charing Cross, Glasgow. Scottish branch of the Central Film Library.

## GOVERNMENT FILM PRODUCTION UNITS

CROWN FILM UNIT, Station Road, Beaconsfield, Bucks. The Government's own unit, administered by the Controller, Films, Central Office of Information.

COLONIAL FILM UNIT, 21 Soho Square, W.1. Administered by the Colonial Office.

## BOOKS AND PERIODICALS

### Books

*The following is a recommended list of books published in this country on various aspects of the cinema, of which copies are still available*

JAMES AGATE: *Around Cinemas* (Home and Van Thal, 1946).

SIR MICHAEL BALCON, FORSYTH HARDY, ERNEST LINDGREN, ROGER MANVELL: *20 Years of British Films* (Falcon, 1947).

EDWARD CARRICK: *Art and Design in the British Film* (Dobson 1949).

BRENDA CROSS: *The Film of Hamlet* (Saturn, 1948).

CATHERINE DE LA ROCHE and THOROLD DICKINSON: *Soviet Cinema* (Falcon, 1948).

H. and J. FELDMAN: *Jean Vigo* (British Film Institute, 1951).

JOHN GRIERSON: *Grierson on Documentary* (Collins, 1948).

RICHARD GRIFFITH: *Frank Capra* (British Film Institute, 1951).

GRAHAM GREENE: *The Third Man* and *The Fallen Idol* (Heinemann, 1950).

CECIL HEPWORTH, *Came The Dawn* (Phoenix House, 1951).

ERNEST LINDGREN: *The Art of the Film* (Allen and Unwin, 1948).

RACHAEL LOW: *History of the British Film* (Allen and Unwin, 1948-51).

ROGER MANVELL: *Film* (Pelican, revised edition, 1949): (editor) *Experiment in the Film* (Grey Walls, 1950), *Movie Parade* (with Paul Rotha) (The Studio, 1950), *The Year's Work in the Film* (British Council, 1950), *A Seat at the Cinema* (Evans, 1951).

J. P. MAYER: *British Cinemas and their Audiences* (Dobson, 1948).

EBBE NEERGAARD: *Carl Dreyer* (British Film Institute, 1950).

PETER NOBLE: *The Negro in Films* (Skelton Robinson, 1948): (editor) *The British Film Yearbook* (Skelton Robinson, 1951).

DILYS POWELL: *Films Since 1939* (British Council, 1947).

JEAN QUEVAL: *Marcel Carne* (British Film Institute, 1950).

PAUL ROTH: *The Film Till Now* (revised edition, with Richard Griffith, Vision, 1950): (editor, with Roger Manvell) *Movie Parade* (The Studio, 1950).

RICHARD WINNINGTON: *Drawn and Quartered* (Saturn, 1949).

BASIL WRIGHT: *The Use of the Film* (Bodley Head, 1949).

### Periodicals

*A recommended list of magazines and periodicals published in Britain*

#### General

SIGHT AND SOUND (quarterly, illustrated, 3s. 6d.). Editor: Gavin Lambert. (The British Film Institute, 164 Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.)

MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN (monthly, 1s. 6d., subscription only: The British Film Institute, 164 Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.)

SEQUENCE (quarterly, illustrated, 2s. 6d.) Editors: Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz. (London Film Club, 20-21 Took's Court, E.C.4.)



CINEMA 1951 (yearly, illustrated, 2s. 6d.) Editors: Roger Manvell and R.K. Neilson Baxter. (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex.)

#### *Trade*

THE CINEMA (weekly, illustrated, 1s.) Editor: L. H. Clark. (93-95 Wardour Street, W.1.)

TO-DAY'S CINEMA (daily, illustrated, 6d.) Editor: L. H. Clark. (93-95 Wardour Street, W.1.)

KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY (weekly, illustrated, 1s. 6d.) Editor: A. L. Carter. (Odhams Press Ltd., Long Acre, W.C.2.)

DAILY FILM RENTER (three times a week, illustrated, 2d.) Editor: Bernard Charman. (127 Wardour Street, W.1.)

MINI-CINEMA (monthly, illustrated, 1s.) Editor: Alan Brien. (93-95 Wardour Street, W.1.)

#### *Technical*

CINE-TECHNICIAN (bi-monthly, illustrated, 1s.) (Association of Cine-Technicians, 2 Soho Square, W.1.)

BRITISH KINEMATOGRAPHY (monthly, illustrated, 3s.). Editor: R. Howard Cricks. (B.K.S., 2 Dean Street, W.1.)

AMATEUR CINE-WORLD (quarterly, illustrated, 9d.). Editor: Gordon Malthouse. (Link House Publications, 24 Store Street, W.1.)  
FILM USER (monthly, illustrated, 1s.). Editors: Bernard Dolman, Brian Watkinson. (Current Affairs Ltd., 174 Brompton Rd., S.W.3.)

#### *Educational*

FILM GUIDE (monthly, 6d.). Editor: Stanley Reed. (British Film Institute, 164 Shaftesbury Avenue, W.C.2.)

LOOK AND LISTEN (monthly, illustrated, 2s.). (Educational Screen, 30 Fleet Street, E.C.4.)

CHURCH AND FILM (bi-monthly, illustrated, 1s.). (British Churches' Film Council, 2, Eaton Gate, S.W.1.)

VISUAL EDUCATION (monthly, illustrated, 1s.) (National Committee for Visual Aids in Education, 33 Queen Anne Street, W.1.)

#### *Fan*

PICTUREGOER and *Film Weekly* (Weekly, illustrated, 3d.). Editor: Connery Chappell. (115 High Holborn, W.C.1.)

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## SIGHT & SOUND

### *The Film Monthly*

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Paul Rotha

SIGHT & SOUND provides a quarterly critical and topical commentary on all aspects of the cinema. Its appeal is international: published in London, it has regular correspondents in Europe and America. As well as film reviews, advance news and pictures, each issue, plentifully illustrated, contains articles of wide interest on the art, economics and social importance of the cinema.

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